CASES OF Conscience Practically Resolved.

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THE PREFACE.

THe reverent Author of this enſuing Treatiſe Mr. *John Norman;* ſome few years ſince deceaſed, is by that ſtate ſecured both from flattery, or obloquy; why then ſhould we light a candle of Praiſe behind his back. In ſhort, the ſole motive to theſe few lines was this, Some dear Relations and Friends of his, deſirous that his name and worth might be made known to ſuch

as knew him not, as it was in the Orb wherein he both moved and ſhined, have importuned this unfeigned character and teſtimony of him. What therefore we have ſeen and heard we teſtifie. While he lived in the Miniſtry he ſhined as an eminent light in this world, holding forth the word of life. His Race while he was in his work was not long, yet did he run his race with great diligence and patience; outſtripping many. A workman that needed not to be aſhamed, adorning his talent and province, and fulfilling, I had almoſt ſaid the Apoſtles character, 2 *Cor.* 6. 4, 5, *&c.* And thus when his Lord came, and called him off, he found him doing

doing. Thus he ſhined in all his motions, and trials, following the Lamb where ever he led him. For the time of my intimacy with him, I found him a man of a choice ſpirit. He was relatively godly as a Paſtor, Husband, Father. God endowed him with rare natural Parts; bleſſed with no ſmall acqueſts both of grace and learning; he was acute, clear, and ſolid in his reaſonings; and in his converſe grave, condeſcending, communicative, and of an amicable ſweetneſs. True to his own light, yet not Magiſterially impoſing it as a rule to others. No ſuperſtitious admirer or adorer of his own notions and ſentiments, eſpecially in ſmall and diſputable mat-

matters; no ſupercilious cenſor of another mans liberty or latitude; as ready to borrow light, as to lend it; accounting it a character of little ſouls to be too nice in little things, and yet not refuſing the ſearch of any thing, by others judged material. Among all other his attainments he had a Scholaſtical dexterity, able to tye, and untye Gordian knots, and no mean caſuiſtical faculty, wherein it were to be wiſht more of our Nation beſides Mr. *Perkins* and *Ames* had ſtudied to excell. Hereof this enſuing piece is ſome taſte, intended by him but as an Eſſay in this part of Theology. Which thou haſt (Chriſtian Reader) preſented to

thee

thee without correction or alteration, wherein if any defect appear, his own Reviſal (prevented by death) would have ſupplied; accept and peruſe it now as it is. A Treatiſe of Conſcience requires a conſcientious Author; which this had, and a conſcientious Reader which it calls for. This is needful in every age and ſtate of the Church, and perhaps principally in ours; both to point our judgments, rectifie miſtakes reduce ſtrayers, heal diviſions, ſettle unſtableneſs, and ſteer our courſe. For it is a ſubject practical, and hath influence into the very vitals of Religion; and though it is a duty, and withal ſome difficulty to obſerve a rule, yet much more to give a rule;

this

this requires a Maſter-workman: though we are caſt into an age critical, curious, & too much quarrelous, (which God heal) yet be thou rather in thy ſtudy conſcientious, practical, and peaceable, this time as well as this Treatiſe calls for it. I have purpoſed with my ſelf to intermix nothing of mine as to the Rhetorick part of this ſubject or the praxis. This Torch is ſet before thee ſingly by it ſelf, ſhining in its own luſtre; walk while thou haſt the light, leſt darkneſs come upon thee. If thou & I by ſuch helps as theſe riſe up to this bleſſed frame, & attain this ineſtimable Jewel, a good conſcience, which is my prayer, thou haſt thy advantage, and he his aim, who is thine in the Lord,

William Cooper.

CASES OF Conſcience.

CHAP. I.

Of Conſcience in General.

Queſt. 1. *Whether there be ſuch a thing as Conſcience in Man?*

A CASE of *Conſcience* is any ſuch *Practical Queſtion* as falls under the Judgment, or if you will under the diſquiſition and determination of Conſcience. Having propounded to my ſelf (in ſo great a *defect*, and in ſo general a *deſire* of *Caſuiſtical* Tractates in our *Engliſh* Tongue) to

Want 12

contribute whatever my poor abilities can afford to a work of ſo important a nature, and of ſo eminent need: I think it very agreeable to your expectation and my employment, in my *entrance* upon this work; The *an ſit* and *quid ſit*, as alſo the *quotuplex* be put upon the enquiry. And ſo, what ſome arrogant *Scepticks* fooliſhly ſtart, and Atheiſtical ſinners would fain ſhake off, is the ſubject of this preliminary Queſtion *.

* See *Baldw. Caſ. Conſ. l. 1. c. 1. Fenner Treat. of Conſ. p. 33 ad 41. Binchi. Mellif. Theol. par. 2. p. 121.*

The queſtion is not whether there be the *ſame* Conſcience in all men? (the ſame it is *in genere naturæ*, though not *morum.*) But whether there be found *ſuch a thing* as is Conſcience in all men? Which I affirm. In this,

1. Will you *conſult the Scriptures?* Lo, Theſe ſuppoſe a Conſcience in all; 1 *Cor.* 10. 29. 1 *Cor.* 10. 19. 2 *Cor.* 4. 2. 2. Send all to conſult with their own Conſciences, *Pſ.* 4. 4. 1 *Cor.* 11. 13. 3. Set all upon cleanſing and keeping of their Conſciences, with the utmoſt diligence, *Prov.* 4. 23. 1 *Tim.* 1. 5. 4. Shew you a Cloud of Witneſſes, not only among the *Pious*, but the *Profane*, the *Pagans*, in the exerciſe of Conſcience, *Act.* 24. 16. *Gen.* 42. 21, 22. *Rom.* 2. 15. 5. And ſpeak the kinds, the keeping, the comforts, concuſſions, acts, authority, &c. of Conſcience; of which hereafter.

So that, though the Scriptures never attempt to *prove* that there is a Conſcience, (as being a propoſition of clear evidence in Nature, and of confeſſed evidence among all Nations) yet do they abundantly *proclaim*, that *there is a*

ſpirit

ſpirit (a Conſcience) *in Man*; *and that the inſpiration of the Almighty hath given him underſtanding*, Job 32. 8.

2. Will you but *commune with your own ſelves?* Whence are thoſe ſeeds and dictats of ſuch religious dues from you to God, of righteouſneſs to men, and of ſobriety in your ſelves, which ſo frequently put forth within you? What or whence thoſe ſuggeſtions for refraining ſin, and for rouzing up your ſelves to, and in the ſervice of the eternal God, and for ſecuring your everlaſting good, which are ſo often prompted to, and preſſed upon you? What, or whence thoſe ſilent reaſonings and motions within your own breaſts, and the ſeveral returns you make into your own boſoms or hearts? What or whence thoſe ſearchings and ſelf-reflections, upon what you are, and act? And ſecret rebukes when you are, or act amiſs, though no eye ſeeth it? As alſo thoſe ſweet refreſhments you inwardly feel, in conſciouſneſs of your own innocency, when others unjuſtly cenſure you, or injuriouſly oppreſs? Briefly, what or whence thoſe ſecret inward records of what you have declined and done, and ſuitable inclinations and recalls thereof to your hearts, eſpecially when death or ſome notable diſtreſs is come upon you, or coming on? What I ſay are *all* or *any* of theſe, but the exertings and acts; and therefore evidences and arguments of that *ſpirit* or *conſcience in man, which is the candle of the Lord ſearching the innermoſt parts of the Belly?* Prov. 20. 27.

3. Will you *confer* with ſuch who never heard of Chriſt, or have read the Scriptures? Read their written Confeſſions, or review the workings of their Conſciences. There are few things that more fully or frequently occur in their *Writings*, than the preſence and power of Conſcience in every man, which God (ſay they) hath given to every one *(a)*, as his deputy, and for their direction, over-rule, and over-ſight *(b)*. That from this is no ſubterfuge, nothing latent *(c)*. That its Teſtimony is of all others the ſtrongeſt *(d)*; its tranquility ſweeteſt *(e)*; its torments ſharpeſt. They therefore abundantly counſel man to ſtudy his own Conſcience *(g)*, and affectionately complain that men ſearch not into, but ſlight their own Conſciences *(h)*. As for the *workings* of their Conſciences, that of the *Apoſtle* is written

(a) *Conſcia mens ut cuiq; ſua eſt, ita concipit intra Pectora pro facto ſpemque metumque ſuo.* Ovid. Faſtor. l. 1. ſ. p. 2.

(b) Βρότοις ἅπασιν ἡ συνείδησις ὁ θεὸς. Menand.——ὃν ἑκάστῳ προστάτην καὶ ἡγέμονα ὁ θεὸς ἔδωκεν. Δικαστὴν θεὸς ἐπέστησε τὸν δικαιότατον ἅμα καὶ οἰκειότατον τὸ συνείδος αὐτὸ, καὶ τὸν ὀρθὸν λόγον. Hierocl. (c) μηδέποτε μηδὲν αἰσχρὸν ποιήσας ἔλπιζε λήσειν, καὶ γὰρ ἂν τοὺς ἄλλους λήσῃς σεαυτῷ συνειδήσεις. Iſocrat. ad Demonic. *Nunquam fides latendi fit etiam latentibus, quia coarguit illos conſcientia & ipſos ſibi oſtendit.* Senec. Epiſt. 97. (d) *Conſcientia mille teſtes. Turpe quid acturus te ſine teſte time. Conſcia mens recti famæ mendacia ridet.* Ovid. Faſtor. l. 1. *Magna vis eſt conſcientiæ judicis, & magna in utramq; partem: Ut neque timeant qui nihil commiſerint, pœnam ſemper ante oculos verſari putent, qui peccârint.* Cicer. pro Milon (e —*Hic murus aheneus eſto; Nil conſcire ſibi nullâ pallescere culpâ.* Horat. l. 1. Epiſt. 1. *Conſcientia rectæ voluntatis maxima conſolatio rerum incommodarum.* Cicer. Epiſt. fam. 4. 6 *Nullâ re tam lætari ſoleo, quàm officiorum meorum conſcientiâ.* Id.—*Quæ etiam obruta delectat, quæ concioni ac famæ reclamat, & in ſe omnia reponit & cum ingentem ex altera parte turbam contra-ſentientium aſpexit, non numerat ſuffragia, ſed unâ ſententiâ vincit.* Sen. de Benef. l. 4. c. 21. *Licet ipſum Corpus plenum bonâ*

bonâ conſcientiâ ſtillet placebit illi ignis per quem bona fides collucebit; Id.ibid. (f) *Nihil eſt miſerius quàm animus hominis conſcius.* Plaut. *Occultum quatiente animum tortore flagellum,— Mens ſibi conſcia facti, Præmetuens adhibet ſtimulos torretq; flagellis.* Lucr. *Pœna autem vehemens & multò ſævior illis quos & Cæditius gravis invenit & Rhadamanthus. Nocte dieq; ſuum geſtare in pectore teſtem.* Juven. (g) *γνῶθι σεαυτὸν. Tecum habita,* Perſ. Sat. 4. *Nec te quæſiveris extra.* Perſ. Sat. 1. (h) *Ut nemo in ſe tentat deſcendere, nemo!* Perſius. Sat. 4.

as with a Sun-beam in *their life*, as well as his Letters. *The Gentiles which have not the Law, are a Law to themſelves, which ſhew the work of the Law written in their hearts; their Conſciences alſo bearing witneſs* (or their Conſciences witneſſing with them), *and their thoughts the mean while accuſing, or elſe excuſing one another*, Rom. 2. 14, 15.

'Tis true, we commonly ſay, ſuch and ſuch are of *no Conſcience*; or have *loſt all Conſcience*. But this is and muſt be underſtood with reference had rather to the *quality*, than to the *faculty*; i.e. they are of no good or honeſt Conſcience; or as Conſcience is conſidered in *act*, rather than in *habit*; they have loſt their Conſcience as we ſay, men have loſt their reaſon; *i.e.* the free and uninterrupted uſe of it. And it is true alſo, that there are who have made *ſhipwrack of all good Conſcience*; that have *ſeared their Conſciences*; and that there are ſuch whom God hath juſtly given over to a *reprobate and remorſleſs* Conſcience cannot be denied, [1 *Tim.* 1. 19. *Rom.* 1. 28]. But Conſcience *it ſelf* ceaſeth not; though ſuch qualities may ceaſe, or are changed. Conſcience is not deſtroyed when defiled; 'tis Conſcience though contemned, *Tit.* 1. 15. 1 *Tim.* 4. 2. We find

the arrests and acts of Conscience even among the damned, the devils, [*Mat.*8.29. *Mar.*9.44.] So that there is a Conscience *universally* in *all*, and cannot *utterly* be extinct in *any* *. Even *they that say unto God, depart from us, we desire not the knowledg of thy ways*; are not therein without the evident self-reflections of an evil and feared Conscience, *Job* 21. 14, 15.

* See *D. Taylor Ductor. Dubitan. l.* 1. *ru.n.* 5. 6, 7.

Q. 2. *There being a Conscience in every man implanted by God, how ought every man to imploy his Conscience in order to God.*

Though Conscience be under the Sovereign command, and of the sole Creation of God, yet hath he substituted every man to be the keeper of his own Conscience under him, and must surrender an account thereof to him, *Prov.* 4. 23. *Mal.*2.15. *Rom.* 14. 12. And if God hath implanted in every man a Conscience, then every man should imploy his Conscience,

1. In the behalf of God, who hath made both them and it for himself, *Isa.* 43. 7. *Prov.* 16. 4. And so in pursuance of his holy inclinations, furthering his supream Government; in promoting his holy interest, vindicating his sovereign glory; in patronage of his holy image, forwarding serious godliness; in propugning his holy intentions and institutions, frustrating (in what they may) the strong hopes and oppositions of his enemies, sin, the world and satan.

2. As before God, who, as he made the Con-

Conſcience, will aſſuredly manifeſt the counſels of the heart, 1 *Cor.* 4. 5. 'Tis good to mind her often of her original, and of his omniſcience; which will both quicken her to her employment, and keep her from extreams. Yea, 'tis neceſſary, that all the acts of Conſcience, and of you toward Conſcience, be done as before the all-ſeeing Creator, leſt they loſe their efficacy and authority upon you, and you loſe your end and attempts upon her, whoſe pravity is ſo deſperate, and policies are ſo deep, *Rom.* 2. 15. *Jer.* 17. 9, 10. *Pſal.* 64. 6. Let her often know from you, that God who created and implanted her, hath a moſt intuitive knowledg therefore of her, and all her intrigues lye open to him. Wo to her if ſhe would hide counſel from him. *Pſal.* 9. 4. 7.----12. *Heb.* 4. 13. *Iſ.* 29. 15, 16.

3. In the buſineſs appointed her of God. Look, what are thoſe offices, which he hath depoſited with her, and ſee that neither you nor ſhe decline them. Look what are thoſe operations which he hath deſigned by her, and ſee that ſhe do them, and that you accordingly demean your ſelves toward her, [of which Q. 4.] God hath ſurrogated and ſet her up. 1. To be a law-giver from him, imploy her in the ſtudy and revelation of what his laws are, and your lives ſhould be, and ſee that you receive the truths ſhe dictateth from him. 2. To be a witneſs for and with him; Imploy her in the obſervation and report of his works and your ways, and ſee that you refuſe not the teſtimony ſhe delivereth for

him. 3. To be a judg under him; Imploy her in the ſearch and determining of your condition; and ſee you remove not the ſentence which ſhe receiveth from him, while you remain in this condition, *Rom.* 2. 14, 15. *Joh.* 8. 9. 2 *Cor.* 5. 11.

4. In a befittingneſs and accord to God; who hath inveſted men with it, and imprinted his mind upon it. 1. In accord to his work herein; Men ſhould not call their concupiſcence, humour, luſt, illuſion, contumaciouſneſs by the precious name of Conſcience. It reflects diſparagement and an odium to its divine riſe and original. 2. In accord to his worth; If Conſcience be implanted in you by him, ſhe is inferiour to him, and ſhould not impoſe upon you, againſt or above his commiſſion. She is then under the rule and authority of him, and muſt render an account to him. 3. In accord to his will, as may beſt expreſs his ſuperiority over her, his ſimilitude upon her, and beſt exemplifie thoſe ſacred inſtructions, which he hath left upon record concerning her.

5. Beyond and above all for him. If Conſcience be firſt implanted by him, ſhe ſhould be finally imployed for him. 'Tis a ſordid employment to put Conſcience upon the palliation or extenuating of a mans corruption; or upon the proviſion and erecting of a mans credit, *&c.* And 'tis a ſorry end to determine her high-bôrn operations within the narrow confines of the object, ſenſe, or of a mans ſelf. If ſhe be of an higher efficient, ſhe ſhould be

be buſied for an higher end. Her acts and anſwers ſhould be all *towards God*, 1 *Pet.* 2. 19. 3. 21. Men ſhould ſtudy to approve their Conſcience to him, to aſſure their Conſcience before him, and to advance and celebrate him by all the *elicit* and *imperate* acts of their Conſcience, 2 *Cor.* 5. 9, 11. 1 *Joh.* 3. 19. *Pſal.* 34. 1, 2, 3.

6. So as to behold, and ſteadily own whatſoever truths he hath ordered out for man's knowledg and obſervation, by implanting him with a Conſcience. And the more eminent any of them are, the more firm ſhould be mans aſſent to them, and the more full and vigorous his adherence to, and aſſerting of them.

Q. 3. *What great truths may every man know and gather up from hence, that there is a Conſcience in him.*

Among and above others, every man may hence know and infallibly conclude theſe enſuing verities. Is there a Conſcience in every man? then let every man,

1. *Behold a Deity* *. *That which may be known of God is manifeſt in them from within*, as well as manifeſt *to* them from without; ſo far at leaſt as will render them *inexcuſable in ſin*, though not as far as may be requiſite and *effectual to Salvation.* The *eternal power and Godhead* are written in lively and legible Characters (not only upon the Creatures, but) *in the Conſcience*, enough to convince the Atheiſt, and whereby he may arrive to the knowledg, both

* *Conſcientia optimus teſtis divinatis.* Tert. *lib. de teſtim. animæ.*

that

that he is, and (to a good degree) what he is alſo, [*Rom.* 1. 19. 20. 2. 14, 15]. The ſeveral truths which are conſerved in the Conſcience, doth ſhe not *dictate as the will of God?* The ſpecial teſtimonies the Spirit communicateth, doth ſhe not *declare as a witneſs for and with God?* The ſentence and judgment wherewith the Spirit concludeth, doth ſhe not deliver as a *ſubſtitute from, & as the ſentence of God?* I need no other evidence for this, than your own experiences, which do plainly enough acquaint you, that all the *offices* Conſcience doth diſcharge are done under and for God; and that the *obligation* ſhe infers is as from ſo by God, So that the being and acts of Conſcience are both a pregnant proof that there is a God, and do powerfully perſwade men to acknowledg his Government, and aſcribe him worſhip and glory.

2. *Behold the Doctrine of Eternity*; rewards of good and evil, that extend beyond death, and all duration of time. Behold your Conſciences do not confine themſelves in their converſes with you, within the narrow limits of mortality. They carry engraven on them an immortal ſtate, with accord to the immortality of your Souls; and by the proſpect of this, they inhibit and reſtrain from vice, inſtigate and rouze us to vertue, refreſh mens hopes at one time, and raiſe fears and torments at another. Manifeſt it is, that Conſcience principally reſtrains and rules by the hopes and fears of a future immortality of glory and miſery. And if there were no ſuch thing, her government ſhould be for the moſt

part

part frivolous and deluſory. 2. Gods giving her to many perſons would be vain and unneceſſary; for how ſhould ſhe contain armed force, or artificial fraud, within the bounds of duty, when the one can ſin ſafely, beyond the puniſhments of this life, and the other ſecretly? Beſides, 3. her glory, in being thus capacitated and raiſed above the brute Creatures would be hers and our ſhame and miſery, and render her and us beneath them; while her hopes ſhe ruleth by, are fruſtrate, and her fears are vexing. which are things utterly to be rejected by all rational men.

3. *Behold a Dooms-day*, or day of judgment. If every man hath a *Conſcience*, then every man muſt give an *accompt*, and come to judgment, and neceſſary it is that the ſeveral judgments of *Conſcience* may be ſet right, and the ſecrets of Conſcience may be revealed and ſet open; [*Rom.*2.12.---17. 1 *Cor.*4.5.] Conſcience is *prejudicium judicii*, as *Tertullian* well. 'Tis an *Emblem* and *evidence* of the day of judgment. Conſcience keeps many a Court before hand as a *Judg*; but lo, ſhe conducts men, as by the hand to a more ſolemn and ſupream judgment. Yea, how often doth ſhe cite men hither, and arreſt men from hence! So that *Paul* preaching of Judgment, maketh even a *Pagan Judg to tremble*, Act. 24. 25. Plain it is, that the judgment of Conſcience refers higher, and reminds men often of a more impartial Judg and Judicature, that is future and certain. Conſcience contains the records of Gods Laws and mens lives as a *Book*. Here men often keep this Book claſped

and

and ſealed; but the righteouſneſs of God in and for the reward of men requireth, that the Books be, and they ſhall be opened, *Revel.* 20. 12. Conſcience is the *Candle of the Lord* ſearching, yea and ſhewing what men are, and have done, as a *witneſs*, whoſe work it is to give evidence in judgment. Here men ſometimes *baffle*, at other times *bribe* this witneſs. It ſhall therefore be brought into an open and impartial Court, where it may neither be *flattered* nor *frighted*, Prov. 20. 27.

4. *Behold Mans Dignity.* If every man hath a Conſcience, than is Mankind advanced in *dignity*, next the very *Angels*. Some of the Creatures have being only and no life, others have being and life, but no ſenſe; theſe again have being, life and ſenſe, but no reaſon. But man was created, and is continued with being, life, ſenſe and reaſon likewiſe. Let your condition as *creatures* be conſidered, and you are but little lower than the Angels, [*Pſ.* 8. 4. &c.] The nobleſt of brute and inanimate Creatures have *no principle of Reaſon*, *no power for ſelf-reflection*; they have neither *ſcience* nor *conſcience*; You have both of them. Be thankful for, be tender of, improve and juſtifie this *Dignity*: Mind it, maintain it; otherwiſe *this Dignity* will but heighten *your damnation*, and you will be worſe than the beaſts that periſh, who, while men injure and abuſe their Conſcience, imploy and improve their brutiſh knowledg, *Rom.* 1. 18. *ad finem Pſ.* 49. 12, 14, 20. *Iſa.* 1. 2, 3, 4.

5. *Behold his duty.* If every man hath a Conſcience, then no man is left to a ſinful licenſe without

without a check or reſtraint upon him, or to his ſelf-luſts without a command to rule him, without a Controller to reprove him, a Conſcience to curb and reprehend him.

What duties are delineated and drawn out upon every mans Conſcience I ſhall not diſcuſs or enquire; though I doubt not to ſay, that there is ſince the fall (at leaſt) a minute-draught left of the Moral law of God upon her: So that he that will not ſhut the eyes of his Conſcience muſt needs ſee, that he is under a law, and debt, of religion toward God, of righteouſneſs toward man, and of temperance and ſobriety to his own ſelf. *The Gentiles which have not the Law are a Law unto themſelves, which ſhew the work of the Law written in their hearts, their Conſcience alſo bearing witneſs, &c.* Rom. 2. 14, 15.

Q. 4. *But what duties hath every man to look to, in that he is not left without Conſcience?*

I anſwer, in that every man hath a Conſcience, he is engaged thereby to look well to the whole compaſs of his duty, and in all things to live honeſtly, *Heb.* 13. 18. For therefore is Conſcience beſtowed upon him, for the better knowledg of his duties, for binding and keeping him to his duties, and for his better conduct in and throughout his duties. But more particularly * there are duties incumbent on you, both 1 in regard that you have a Conſcience, and in 2. regard of the Conſcience that you have.

* See *Fenners* Treat. of Conſc. p. 38, &c.

(1.) In

(1.) In that you have a Conſcience.

1. *Be leſs ſenſual.* Senſuality is for *Brutes*, that are led by ſenſe and imagination. But *there is a ſpirit in man*, an internal principle of knowledg and Conſcience, which no ſenſible object is ſuitable to, or can ſatisfie, [*Pſ.* 49. 6. *ad finem*] the wiſdom, wills, ways that are earthly and ſenſual, are below a man; are *brutiſh*, yea *deviliſh*, Jam. 3. 15. Jam. 73. 22. Compared with the former uſes.

2. Be more *Spiritual*, both in the *offices* you perform, and in the *objects* you pitch upon. There is a Conſcience in every one of you, which *knoweth the things* (not only *without*, but) *within man*, the interior motions of the mind, as well as the exterior of the members, 1 *Cor.* 2. 11. See there be *truth* then *in the inward and hidden parts*; and ſlubber not over outward religious actions without inward religious acts and affections. Let there be a proportion within, to your practice without; which is not only requiſite, in that you have a Conſcience, but it will richly *aſſure your heart and Conſcience before God*, 1 Joh. 3. 18, 19.

3. Be more *ſtrict in ſecret.* You cannot lock Conſcience out of your Cloſets or Counting-houſes. Here is a *ſpy* and *centinel* from God *upon* you, yea in you, whereſoever you are, and whatſoever you are about. The moſt ſecret omiſſion or commiſſion can never eſcape the *privy ſearch* of Conſcience, or its *judicial cenſure.* It *ſearcheth all the inward parts of the belly*, Prov. 20. 27.

4. Be

4. Be more *circumſpect*. *Ponder the paths of your feet*, look well to your eſtates and actions. *Walk circumſpectly*. Hazard not a breach with Conſcience for theſe bitter-ſweet comforts, or thy Salvation for Secular vanities. Adventure not upon ſin, or the ſnares that induce to, or intangle in ſin. Remember Conſcience is *with* thee, yea *within* thee; a ſtrict *Notary to write*, a ſure *Obſerver to witneſs*; and a ſevere *Judg to puniſh* thy precipitate, eſpecially thy preconſulted iniquities.

II. In regard of the Conſcience you have. Have you a Conſcience? Then,

1. *Act Conſcience*. All *habits* and all *powers* are for *action*. And the more eminent they are, the more for exerciſe. You imploy the *ſenſitive* and *brutiſh* part; why ſhould the *Rational* and *Angelical* part (as Conſcience is) lie idle? The more inactivity, the more you contract of inability here; and the more will be compenſate for this injury hereafter, *Rom.* 1.21, *&c.*

2. *Attend Conſcience*. Its orders, offices, obligation, all the items, intimations, and inſtructions, which thou haſt from it. Whatſoever it ſaith, eſpecially that it *ſelf be ſafe*; here is the *main guard*; if Sin or Satan ſeiſeth this, what is ſafe? *Keep thy heart* (which includeth the Conſcience) *with all diligence, above all keeping, for out of it are the iſſues of life*, Prov. 4. 23.

3. *Acquaint your ſelves* with Conſcience. You ſeek correſpondence *abroad*, and ſhould you be ſtrangers to Conſcience at *home*, which dwells under the ſame roof with your ſelf;

and

and is expreſſed to you by *your very ſelves* in the Scripture? *Judg in your ſelves*, 1 Cor. 11.13,18. *i.e.* Judg in your Conſciences; *Let a man examine himſelf*: i.e. Let him examine his Conſcience, 1 *Cor.* 11.28. *Know ye not your own ſelves?* So *large* acquaintance with *others* and ſo *little* with thy *own* ſelf? *Go, commune with your own hearts upon your beds and be ſtill*, 2 Cor. 13.5. Pſal. 4. 4.

4. *Aſſure Conſcience.* Here is an *inteſtine* friend or enemy, and therefore the beſt friend or worſt enemy. 'Tis a general office, and of greateſt over-ſight. Oh the happy conſequence of aſſuring Conſcience, you *aſſure the God of conſcience* who will acquit and accept you; and therewith *confidence toward God*, not only of *acceſs* to, but of audience, by him, in whatſoever you ask of him. 1 *Joh.* 3.19.——23.

Q. 5. *What is Conſcience in Man?*

What Conſcience in Angels is, comes not within the compaſs of this Queſtion, nor much concerns our knowledg. 'Tis true, we find Conſcience at work, both in the Angels that kept their firſt eſtate, [*Rev.* 19. 10.] and in thoſe that kept it not, [*Mat.* 8. 29.] But this is eccentrick to our deſign, which is to diſcuſs Conſcience in man; wherein I may not apply my ſelf to feed the itch of a Polemical School-queriſt, but as may beſt fit the intention of a ſober practical Caſuiſt.

The *An ſit* hath been ſpoken to; the *Quid ſit* is the ſubject now before us. And in that the

the nature of the thing is often exhibited us in the notation of the term, whereby it is expreſſed.

I ſhall premiſe ſomething of the name, then preſent to you its nature.

1. For the *Name.* There is not one word which *preciſely* ſignifieth the Conſcience, whereby 'tis expreſſed in the Old Teſtament. Sometimes it is expreſſed by *Spirit*, *Prov.* 18. 14. *Pſal.* 34. 14. and therewith accords *Pauls* mention of it, 1 *Cor.* 2. 11. *The ſpirit of man* (*i.e.* his Conſcience), *which is in him.* Sometimes by heart, 2 *Sam.* 24. 10. 1 *King.* 2. 44. with which agrees that of 1 *Joh.* 3. 20, 21. *If our heart* (*i.e.* our Conſcience), *condemn, &c.* I ſhall not omit what is obſerved by *A. Burges*, * that the firſt ſignification of the word, [לב *leb.*] rendred heart, is a conſperſion, or meal ſprinkled with water; which points us, how the heart or conſcience of man is conſperſed, and water'd with ſome common principles and notions about good and evil, and accordingly is to make application of them.

* Of *Orig. ſin par.* 3. *c.* 2. *ſ.* 1.

The *Greek* συνείδησις, and Latin *Conſcientia*, from whence we have our *Engliſh* word Conſcience, ſignifie a knowledg together. *Conſcientia eſt quaſi conjuncta ſcientia.* Conſcience is a conjunct ſcience; both as it reſpects ſeveral ſubjects, and ſeveral objects. A knowledg together of many *Subjects*; or by and with others; and of many *objects*, or of others.

1. 'Tis a knowledg together with others. * *Sum q: Conſcientia eſt cum alio ſcientia*, as *Aquinas* *. 79 *a* 13.

And that not ſo much with other men; though the ſincerely conſcientious would fain commend himſelf to every mans Conſcience in the ſight of God, and is careful of keeping cloſe to that univerſally received rule of Conſcience, *Math.* 7. 12, *Luk.* 6. 31. 2 *Cor.* 4. 2. 2. Nor ſo much with a mans own ſelf; when the heart and head are agreed in the judgment which is made. And a man can ſay with *Paul*, *My conſcience alſo bearing me witneſs.* *Conſcientia eſt quaſi cordis ſcientia*, ſaith *Bernard* *. Knowledg in the head alone is barely ſcience, (as one ſaith *); but knowledg in the heart too is Conſcience rightly ſo called. 3: But 'tis a knowledg together with God. *Cum Deo ſcientia. Behold my witneſs is in heaven, and my record is on high*, ſaith *Job*, *Ch.* 16. 19. And *Paul*, *I ſpeak the truth in Chriſt, and lie not, my conſcience alſo bearing me witneſs in the Holy Ghoſt*, Rom. 9. 1. He produceth three witneſſes ſay our Annotators (*) Chriſt, Conſcience, and the Holy Ghoſt.

* *De interior: Domo.*

Cor quando ſe novit appetatur Conſcientia, quando præter ſe alia, ſcientia. Id. ib.

* *Sheffield* Good Conſc. *c.* 1 *p.* 17.

* *Ad loc.*

2. 'Tis a Knowledg together of many objects. Theſe Conſcience doth not abſtractly or apart conſider, but always conjoyns in its proceeds and operation, knitting one knowledg and object to another, and conjoyning one to another: Adding ſcience unto ſcience, as one ſaith (*b*). The univerſal knowledg, or the knowledg of law aud right, to the particular knowledg, or the knowledg of the fact, by applying one unto the other.

b *Sanderſ. de Oblig. Conſc. Prælect.* 1. §. 6.

2. The nature of Conſcience I ſhall briefly diſcuſs

diſcuſs, in explicating this definition. Conſcience in man is mans judgment of himſelf; *i.e.* of his eſtate and actions, as it and they are ſubjected to the judgment of God. The definitions and deſcriptions hereof are variouſly given by various Authors. This of Dr. *Ames* (*a*) ſeems to me very conſonant, and comprehenſive enough, which is cloſed with by devout *Fenner* (*b*), and by Dr. *Anneſlie* (*c*). This ſpeaks its nature, and ſuits with Scripture. *Judg you. Judg in your ſelves. If we would judg our ſelves. Judg between me and my Vineyard*, Act. 14. 19. 1 Cor. 11. 13, 31. Iſa. 5. 3.

a *De Conſ. l.* 1. *c.* 1. *n.* 1.
b *Treat. of Conſ. p.* 32
c *Cripleg. Lect. Ser.* 1. *p* 3.

Firſt. I ſay 'tis mans judgment: I know there is who likes not the mention hereof in the definition of Conſcience; Becauſe, ſaith he, ſome acts of Conſcience cannot, without ſome force or ſtraining, be referred hither. But I muſt acknowledg (without any ill reflection had on an Author, whom I do ſo highly reverence) that the force of this reaſon is not ſo ponderous and preſſing with me, while this which I adhere unto, hath the favour and countenance of the Scripture (as before) and while (in a fair conſtruction), Conſcience judgeth what is the matter of law before it in the firſt propoſition; what is the matter of fact in the ſecond propoſition, and is moſt ſtrictly and plainly acknowledged to be a Judg in the third propoſition.

Q. What is the ſubject of the Conſcience; wherin it reſideth?

Conſcience then is mans Judgment, and ſo appertaineth to the Underſtanding; not to the Speculative underſtanding, which judgeth only of things as true, and hath this alone

for its object; but to the practical underderſtanding, which judgeth of things not only as true, but in their tendency alſo; or as they are operable or ordinable to action. Conſcience appertaineth then to the practical intellect (c), not to the ſpeculative, nor to the will. Conſcience is a conjunct ſcience as hath been ſaid. *The heart knoweth its own bitterneſs*, Prov. 18. 14. *Oft times alſo thine heart knoweth, that thou alſo haſt curſed others*, Eccleſ. 7. 22. But the will is a blind, and no knowing power, as is generally acknowledged. Nevertheleſs it is true, that as the will hath no ſmall influence upon the Conſcience, to interrupt it in, and to encline and engage it to the diſcharge of its acts and offices; ſo the Conſcience doth in the diſcharge thereof, include therewith, at leaſt infer thereupon, ſuitable inclinations ordinarily in, and impreſſions on the will; I might add, and upon the affections alſo: its judgment uſually being received, either with delight and joy on the one hand, or with diſplicence, dread and grief on the other.

c *Vid. Saunderſ. de oblig. Conſ. Præ. 1. §. 21. Rutherf. Libert of Conſc. c. 1. p. 4, 5. Baldw. Caſ. Conſ. l. 1. c. 3.*

2. Whether Conſcience be an act, power, or habit?

But now, whether Conſcience be an habit, or act, or power of the practical underſtanding, is of a more ſtrict and ſubtil diſquiſition among the School-men; for accommodation whereof, conſult our own learned *Saunderſon* *. Truth is, 'tis but very little we underſtand of our own ſelves; a labour of unqueſtionable difficulty to define and diſcriminate things of ſo near a cognation in nature, and connexion in uſe and exerciſe, as powers, habits, and acts are. Yet ſomething muſt be left

* *De Obl. Conſcient. Præl. 1. §. 7. ad 2. Burgeſ. Orſin part. 3. c. 2 ſ. 1.*

left for looſing and untying this knot. Conſcience is ſometimes of a larger, ſometimes of a ſtricter and more limited acceptation.

1. Conſcience is ſometimes largely taken, and in the vulgar uſe of this term, it is of a very large circumference and comprehenſion. It is of known and confeſſed obſervation, that the judgment of Conſcience is not conſummate or perfected, but by diſcourſe in ſome practical Syllogiſm, which is ſtill formally or elſe virtually done *. As thus,

He that believeth and is baptized ſhall be ſaved.
But I believe and am baptized.
Therefore I ſhall be ſaved.

* *Vid. Ameſ de Conſc l.* 1. *c.* 1. *n.* 7, 8, 9, 10.

In the firſt propoſition you have the Truth, which Conſcience dictates, and therein ſtill ſhines forth the light and laws of Conſcience. In the ſecond you have the Teſtimony, which Conſcience delivers, and therein we ſtill ſee the written Records, and witneſſing reflections and reports of Conſcience. In the third you have the Sentence denounced by Conſcience; and herein Conſcience ſits moſt properly as a Judg. Now thus, within the circumference of Conſcience are theſe three things. (with a different reſpect unto which, Conſcience may be accounted either a power, or habit, or act), 1. there is the συντήρησις, or conſerved truths and laws of Conſcience, which are ſtill had in the firſt propoſition. 2. And the συνείδησις, (Conſcience more properly ſo called), or the conſentient Teſtimony of Con-

ſcience, which is ſtill aſſumed in the ſecond propoſition. 3. And the κρίσις, or concluſory judgment, which is ſtill made in the laſt propoſition. All theſe fall vvithin Conſcience, its lines of communication, its large and uſual acceptation *. And indeed all theſe are manifeſtly included in the having and exerciſe of a good Conſcience, profeſſed by *Paul*, *Heb.* 13. 18. *Act.* 24. 16. and in the advice and exhortation which is preſſed by *Peter*, 1 *Pet.* 3. 16. *Having a good Conſcience, &c. i.e.* a Conſcience well principled with truth, as concerns the former propoſition, and well performing its teſtimony and judicial ſentence, as concerns the two latter. A Conſcience conſerving good laws, and conformably giving a good ſuffrage or teſtimony, and a good ſentence or judgment. With reſpect to the former (unleſs as it is ſubjectively taken for that intellective practical power, wherein theſe laws are engraven (which yet we uſually ſay are written in the Conſcience) it is an intellective habit (as the Schools * generally determine, and ours * alſo) of the firſt principles about good and evil. With reſpect to the latter I humbly conceive it is a power of the practical underſtanding, (of which by and by). And as it is taken *effectivè* for an act or motion of the Conſcience, (as it is uſed in 1 *Pet.* 2. 9. *If a man for Conſcience ſake towards God endure grief, &c. i.e.* for the dictates and directions, and ſo diſcharge of his Conſcience), ſo it may be deſcribed by an act.

* *Rutherf. of Libert. of Conſc. c. 1. p. 637.*

* *Aquin. Sum. 1. q. 79. a. 12. Sayr. clav. reg. c. 2.*

* *Ames. de Conſc. l. 1. c. 2 n. 1. &c.*

2. Con-

2. Conſcience is ſtrictly taken, as hath been noted. And that it is not an act in this ſenſe, as *Aquinas* * and his Followers do contend, ſeems to me evident. Partly becauſe there are the acts of Conſcience, as to accuſe, acquit, &c. and acts do not flow from acts, but either from ſome forms or power, or habit: 2. And becauſe of the abſurdity thereupon conſequent. If Conſcience were an act, then Conſcience were not, when it acted not; and ſhould ceaſe to be, as often as we ſleep, or Conſcience doth ceaſe to act, which is againſt the evidence both of Nature and Scripture; which ſtates it to be Conſcience ſtill, though now ſeared, 1 *Tim.* 4. 2.

* *Sum.* q. 79. a. 13.

I cloſe with them rather, who call it a power (*a*), rather than an habit of the practical intellect: (though it be true, that the other opinion hath its ſtrong and ſubtil patrons (*b*) and ſpecious, and ſhrewd pretenſions). Not only (1) in that Conſcience cites and calls before it, all the other powers, ſifts, ſits upon and cenſureth them (*c*). But in that (2) it is contradiſtinguiſhed from another power, *viz.* the Mind, *Tit.* 1. 15. (3) In that by this men have their potency, to the acts hereafter mentioned. *Qu.* 4. (4) And alſo, in that it is proper to, and inſeparable from any the ſons of men; and therefore is as natural, as any other power of man whatſoever. Yet that Conſcience may in no ſenſe be called an habit, as well as is ſcience, for the reaſons by a Modern (*d*) given, I ſhall not impugn.

a See *Perkins Treat. of Conſc. vol.* 1. *p.* 517.
Baldw. caſ. l. 1. *c.* 3. *Ruiberf. lib. of conſ. c.* 1. *p.* 3. *&c. Huit of Conſc. p.* 87.
b *Scotus & Duran. l.* 2 *Diſtin.* 39
c *Harriſ. Pauls Exerciſe.*
d *Sanderſ. ibid. §.* 16, 17, 18.

Q. What is the object of Conſcien. which it reſpecteth and treats.

Secondly. I add Conſcience is Mans judgment of himſelf; *i.e.* of his eſtate and actions. Conſcience rides circuit throughout all the man, and reflects upon all in and of man, 'Tis ſet up as a Judg, not only in Mans ſelf, 1 *Cor.* 11. 13. but of mans ſelf, *v.* 31. Conſcience is therefore placed as it were in the midſt, between God and man, as an arbitrator to give ſentence, and to pronounce, either with man or againſt man, unto God. So *Perkins* *. There is nothing of us or ours hid from the inſpection, enquiries and judgment of Conſcience; neither our eſtate, nor actions *. 'Tis the *candle of the Lord. ſearching all the inward parts of the belly* Prov. 20. 27.

* *Treat. of Conſc. c.* 1.

* See *Anneſley Cripl. left. p.* 4.

1. *For Mans Eſtate.* It is not only put upon the ſcrutiny of our eſtates once and again, [2 *Cor.* 13. 5. *Pſal.* 4. 4. *cum.* 3.] but paſſeth ſentence frequently. Conſcience told the Goaler and thoſe *Jews*, that they were in a loſt and miſerable eſtate; ſo that they cried out, *Sirs, what muſt we do to be ſaved?* Act. 16. 30. 2. 37. Conſcience tells *John* and other Believers in Jeſus, that they were in a ſafe and happy eſtate; *We know that we are paſſed from death to life*, *Joh.* 3. 14. See alſo *ver.* 19, 21.

2. *As for Mans Actions.* It ſees into and ſits upon and ſentenceth all of them, whether external or internal; whether duties and ſervices, or defects and ſins, whether toward God, or toward man; all acts concerning holineſs or honeſty, [*Act.* 24. 16. *Heb.* 13. 18]. Conſcience looks inward to, and judgeth of the root, ſpring, and ſincerity of our actions, [*Heb.* 9.

14.

14. 2 *Cor.* 1. 12]. Outward, to the fruits and circumſtances of our actions, [2 *Cor.* 4. 2. 2 *Tim.* 1. 3, 4.] Upward, to approve its actions in Gods eye, and to anſwer Gods ends, and his engagements, [2 *Cor.* 2. 17, 1 *Pet.* 3. 21]. Downward, by an holy activity and ſelf-judging, to avoid the ſevere judgments there prepared. [1 *Cor.* 11, 31, 32]. It looks backward upon former actions, and ſmiteth for them, if they have been evil, [2 *Sam.* 24, 10.] And forward alſo, toward future actions, cautioning us againſt ſuch as are evil that we decline them, [*Gen.* 39. 9.] And charging us to ſuch as are good, to do them, [1 *Pet.* 3. 16]. The object of Conſcience then is very large and extenſive. So that as one ſaith *, *'Tis much eaſier to reckon up, what is not the object of Conſcience, then what is.* In brief, whatſoever is morally operable is the object of Conſcience, whatſoever Conſcience doth or may operate about in a Moral ſenſe; and ſo takes in both our eſtate toward God, and all our actions; not only ſuch as are moral operables in a ſtricter ſenſe; but ſuch as are only thus, in a larger ſenſe, as is Evangelical faith it ſelf to be accounted *. This being as the command, ſo the work of God; that we believe in his Son Jeſus Chriſt, *Joh.* 6. 29. 1 *Joh.* 3. 23.

* Annesley qu. ſupra.

* Sander. Prael. 1. §. 23.

Nay, there is not an act of that Moral indifferency, which we may call properly humane, (the indeliberate and immoral actions of man, which grow out of the imagination and diſpoſition of natural qualities I except, as being not in propriety of ſpeech humane, as

not

* *Aquin. Sum.* 12. *q.* 18. *a.* 9. not proceeding from the Soul as reaſonable *) I ſay there is not ſo indifferent an act, which comes not within the ſight and cenſure of Conſcience, though not as ſuch, or *ſecundum ſpeciem*; yet in its ſingular exiſtence, and as 'tis circumſtanced; by which circumſtances Conſcience conſiders it, made either morally good, or elſe morally evil. Thus *Davids* heart ſmote him, but for cutting off the skirt of a garment, an act in it ſelf indifferent. But Conſcience attends the circumſtances. It was the skirt of *Saul* his Sovereign, and Gods Subſtitute; and therefore a ſin in him, who was his ſubject, ſervant, &c. 1 *Sam.* 24. 5, 6.

Q. What is the end of Conſcience to which it refers?

Thirdly. 'Tis *Mans judgment of himſelf*; i.e. of his eſtate and actions, as it and they are ſubjected to the judgment of God. Conſcience being Gods Subſtitute, and ſet by God himſelf upon the throne of Judicature, doth therefore ſubordinate all to God; all its objects and in all its operations. It eyes God as the ſupream Judg, both of it and of them, in its regular acts and exerciſes. *Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts*, Pſal. 139. 23, 24. Nor doth Conſcience aſcite either the eſtate or any action into, or ſit upon them in judgment; but as they and it are ſubjected to him, who is ſuperiour to the Conſcience, greater than the heart, *and knoweth all things*, 1 *Joh.* 3. 20, 21. Truth is, when Conſcience acts it ſelf it is ſteered by, and ſubordinated to the judgment of God in its whole judicial proceſs. In the firſt propoſition 'tis ruled by, and ſubjected to the judgment of God, in point

point of truth; or as to matter of law. In the ſecond propoſition 'tis ruled by and ſubjected to it, in point of teſtimony, or as to matter of fact; and therefore in the third propoſition (which is but a reſult from and upon the two former) there cannot but be a ſubordination and ſubjection ſtill had and made, either virtually or formally, to the ſame righteous and unerring judgment. *How ſhall I do this great wickedneſs and ſin againſt God?* ſaith Conſcience in *Joſeph.* As I have done, ſo God hath requited me, ſaith Conſcience in *Adoni-bezek. Whether it be right in the ſight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judg ye?* ſay *Peter* and *John* to the *Jewiſh* Rulers, when they would ſet Conſcience in them at work. *Gen.* 39. 9. *Judg.* 1. 7. *Act.* 4. 19.

The office of Conſcience then in *general* is to judg, for, from, and under God, which is incluſive of many particular acts, or (as ſome pleaſe to phraſe it) offices, whereof I ſhall give you a ſuccinct view in opening a ſixth Queſtion.

Q. 6. *What are the Offices of Conſcience? and how may we ſo order her and our ſelves in them as to come off with more clearneſs.*

The Offices of Conſcience are beſt obſerved and opened by a review of the manner of its operation or judgment, which is by way of Diſcourſe, in a practical Syllogiſm, as hath been already mentioned. Let me offer two inſtances more. Thus,

All

All that have the Lord for their God are in an happy or bleſſed eſtate.
But I have the Lord for my God. Therefore,
I am in an happy or bleſſed eſtate.

Again,

All ſin is to be avoided for it ſelf.
But this idleneſs of mine is ſin. Therefore,
This idleneſs of mine is to be avoided for it ſelf.

Here are two Syllogiſms which ſhew the manner of Conſcience, its operations, both as concerns my eſtate in the firſt Syllogiſm, and as concerns action of mine in the latter. In each Syllogiſm there are (as you ſee) three propoſitions. This is the proceeding of Conſcience, in all the judgments it maketh. The offices of Conſcience are obviouſly pointed us out in and by theſe ſeveral Propoſitions.

The firſt Propoſition ſtill manifeſtly contains ſome general law or rule, whereby I may come to a clear iſſue in judgment, what my actions have been, or elſe ſhould be, and what my eſtate is. Thus Conſcience hath the office of a Law-giver; thus ſhe is to conſerve for us, and (1.) to communieate or dictate to us laws or rules, of general right and verity, as concern our eſtates and actions. And ſo the Apoſtle ſometimes appeals it: *Know ye not* (*i.e.* do not your Conſciences tell you?) *that the unrighteous ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God?* 1 Cor. 6. 9. *Know ye not, that to whom ye yield your ſelves ſervants to obey, his ſervants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of ſin unto death, or of obedience to righteouſneſs?* Rom. 6. 16.

i.e.

i.e. Do not your Conſciences dictate as much as this? So 1 *Cor.* 11. 13, 14. *Judg in your ſelves*, &c. Conſcience is appealed to in this general concernment; *Is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?* Again, *Doth not even nature it ſelf* (*i.e.* doth not even natural Conſcience) *teach you, that if a man have long hair it is a ſhame unto him?*

(3.) To chalk out and deſcry our liberty. As it is to dictate law, or what muſt be in matters neceſſary; ſo it is to diſcern liberty, what may or may not be, in matters of indifferency *. That Conſcience hath to order and officiate for us in thing adiaphorous, is afore premiſed, & the Apoſtle prompteth, 1 *Cor.* 10. 25, 27.

* *Ames. de Conſc. l.* 1. *c* 3. *n.* 1.

I know there are that approve not the mention of theſe acts to the account of Conſcience. But the twofold acceptation of Conſcience tendered you (*Queſt.* 5. *pag.* 21.) a more large and in a more limited ſenſe) may ſalve their exceptions. And that ſuch dictates and laws appertain to Conſcience, in the common and received uſage of Conſcience, (which I am particularly concerned to attend) needs no other proof, than the frequency of ſuch ſpeeches among us. My Conſcience tells me, Men ſhould do to others as they would be done by. My Conſcience tells me ſuch and ſuch things muſt be done which are matters of general right and equity. And they that deny ſuch clear and commonly received laws of general right, are in common ſpeech ſaid to offer violence to their Conſciences. So my Conſcience tells me ſuch and ſuch matters

Q. 5 *p.* 26.

may

may be declined and forborn, which are matters of indifferency.

'Tis true, there is no ſmall difference between the συντήρησις, the conſervation of ſuch laws and rules, and the συνείδησις, or Conſcience ſtrictly ſo called *. But I muſt follow the vulgar uſage and ſenſe of this term, as moſt fitting my deſign. There is an habit, bank, and treaſury of light and laws with Conſcience, and which it conſerves: Here is the συντήρησις. There is the application of them had and made by Conſcience; here is the συνείδησις and κρίσις.

* See *Baldw. Caſ. Conſ. l. 1. c 4.*

The ſecond and third Propoſitions ſtill make application of ſome general law or rule (had in the firſt Propoſition) to a mans particular eſtate or actions. Thus it is the office of Conſcience, to apply general Propoſitions and Canons to a mans perſonal and particular caſe and concern. And indeed the *Thomiſts* * do make Conſcience to be nothing elſe, but an application of the knowledg or light which is in the *Syntereſis*, and therefore define it to be an act. Though to ſpeak properly, as one * obſerveth, the application of ſcience is not Conſcience it ſelf, but an act of it. And as another * ſaith. 'Tis the ſame Conſcience that acts all three parts, of a law, of a witneſs, and of a judg.

* *Aquin. Sum. 1. q. 79. a. 13*

* *Sanderſ. Præl. 1. de Conſc. §. 14.*

* *Rutherf. libert. of Conſc. c. 1. p. 6.*

The ſecond Propoſition contains the direct teſtimony of Conſcience; and with reſpect to this, the office of Conſcience in general is that of a witneſs. Thus *Paul* ſuggeſts of his own and touching the Conſcience of the Gentiles,

----*My*

---My Conſcience alſo bearing me witneſs, Rom. 9. 1. *Their Conſciences alſo bearing witneſs*, Rom. 2.15.

The witneſs of Conſcience may be either conſidered, 1. as it is in habit, and reſts upon record. Or 2. as it is in act, or is reduced thereunto: which is by two ſteps. 1. Conſcience caſts back a reflection upon its own records, of our eſtate and actions; and conſiders and ruminates upon them. And then 2. Conſcience comes forth and reports to us, how the caſe now ſtands, or hath ſtood, agreeable to thoſe records, and to this reflection.

The office or act of Conſcience then in reſpect of the ſecond Propoſition, is threefold.

(1.) To regiſter and book down, what a man is and doth. And in truth, Conſcience is (as one * well) the great Regiſter and Recorder of the world: It hath the pen of a ready writer. Not a word from the mouth, not a work of man, not a thought of the mind can eſcape or paſs its ſwift pen. It is Gods Hiſtorian, ſaith Dr. *Reynolds* *, that writes not Annals but Journals. Conſcience hath its book, and had its table, whereon it did indelebly write both the ſins of *Judah*, and the ſincerity of *Job*, *Rev.* 20. 12. *Jer.* 17. 1. *Job* 27. 6.

* *Sheffield. good Conſ. c.* 4. *p.* 52.

* *of the Paſſions, c.* 41.

(2.) To reflect and bring back to the heart, as the expreſſion of *Solomon* is in the margin of 1 *King.* 8. 47. Conſcience is to every man, not only as his private Notary, but as his petty-

petty-Conſtable, to ſearch into and ſeize upon every miſcarrying act and habit. Conſcience reviews its regiſter, recalls and reads over its records. Here are thoſe ſayings in, and ſayings to the heart, that Scripture and experience tell us of, *Jer.* 5. 24. *Hoſ.* 7. 2. *marg.* Thoſe communings with our hearts, and calling upon our own actions and eſtates, thoſe countings and ſelf-ſearches how the caſe ſtands. *Pſal.* 4.4. 77. 6. Herewith Conſcience comparing our paſt actions and intentions with the Canons and rules conſerved in the *συνήρησις*, ruminates and bethinks according to the caſe and concern before it. Conſcience conſiders the matter, *I conſidered in my heart, ſaith the Preacher*; or, I gave or ſet to my heart,, *Hebr. Eccleſ.* 9.1. Conſcience is not only to conſult its books, or caſt back an eye; but to conſider the affair before it attentively. *Now therefore thus ſaith the Lord of Hoſtes, conſider your ways,* (Hebr.) *Set your heart on your ways.* Hag. 1. 5. 7. Here are thoſe layings to heart, we read of in the Prophets. *Jer.* 5. 24. *Mal.* 2. 2.

3. To report and bring forth its teſtimony, according as the matter hath been or is. Thus Conſcience in *Joſephs* Brethren, had taken and bookt down their ſin; after this, turns back and tells them of it, and of the circumſtances wherewith Conſcience conſidered it to be aggravated. *We ſaw the anguiſh of his Soul, and we would not hear, &c.* Gen. 42. 21, 22. Conſcience in *Pharaohs* Butler had recorded, did recall, rip up and read him his faults. *Gen.* 41. 9. *David, Job,* and *Paul* are contumeliouſly cenſured,

ſured and cried out upon; Conſcience caſts back a reflection, conſults its own records, conſiders their uprightneſs, and the others reproaches, and cleareth up their righteouſneſs, *Pſal.* 7. 3, 4. *Job* 27. 5, 6, &c. 2 *Cor.* 1. 12.

As this is the office of Conſcience to give teſtimony in relation to what is paſt; ſo alſo in relation to what is preſent; Conſcience witneſſeth both 1. what we are, or what our eſtate is. *The ſpirit witneſſeth with our ſpirits, that we are the Sons of God*, Rom. 8. 16. 2. And what we act, or what our actions are. Witneſs *Pauls* example. *I ſpeak the truth in Chriſt, I lye not, my Conſcience alſo bearing me witneſs*, Rom. 9. 1. 3. And whatever you are or intend, *Pſal.* 17. 3. 2 *Cor.* 1. 17.

The third Propoſition contains the deciſive judgment of Conſcience; and with reſpect to this moſt properly and ſtrictly, the office of Conſcience is to judg; *If we would judg our ſelves we ſhould not be judged*, 1 Cor. 11. 31. Conſcience is herein judicially to apply the truth dictated in the firſt Propoſition, upon the teſtimony delivered in the ſecond Propoſition, and doth infer the Concluſion from thoſe premiſes, according to its apprehenſion of the rule or law in the firſt or major Propoſition, and according to its atteſtation and report of our life or actions in the ſecond or minor Propoſition.

The judgment conſcience pronounceth ſometimes reſpects our eſtate, and ſometimes reſpecteth our actions, and both of them either 1. as good, or elſe 2. as evil. And thus again either

1. as it reſpects the time paſt or preſent; or elſe 2. as it reſpects the time future, either as they have formerly been, or now are, or henceforth ſhould be.

Firſt, as it reſpects the time paſt and preſent. The office of Conſcience in regard of what is and hath been good, is to acquit and clear; In regard of what is and hath been evil, it's to accuſe and condemn, *Rom.* 2. 15. *Their Conſcience alſo bearing them witneſs, and their thoughts the mean while excuſing, or elſe accuſing one another.*

1. If the eſtate and actions be or have been good, Conſcience is accordingly to acquit and clear. This it doth (1.) to and before God, as its ſuperior in judgment, whom it doth 1. ſometime appeal, as the ſupream Judg. *Judg me, O Lord, according to my righteouſneſs, and according to mine integrity that is in me,* Pſal. 7. 8. 26. 1. And 2. ſometimes it apologizeth and excuſeth us to him, not by extenuating our ſin * but by inſiſting on our ſincerity. *Lord,* (ſaith *Abimelech*) *in the integrity of my heart, and innocency of my hands have I done this. Remember, O Lord, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart.* So *Hezekiah,* Gen. 20. 5, 6. *Iſa.* 38. 3.

* *Excuſatio enim hic non ſtrictiore ſenſu accipitur, quo diminutionem vel attenuationem culpæ deſignat; ſed illo quo plenam culpæ & reatus amotionem notat.* Amef.

This it doth alſo (2.) from God, as his ſubſtitute in the judgment from whence Conſcience is by office to approve and abſolve. 1. To approve the good, and ſo our hearts are

are aſſured before, and we have confidence toward God, 1 *Joh.* 3. 19, 21. *I have finiſhed my courſe* (ſaith *Paul*) *I have kept the faith*; Conſcience approves it, and ſo aſſures him, *Henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of Righteouſneſs, which the Lord the righteous Judg ſhall give me, &c.* 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8. 2. To abſolve from evil, 1. from evils threatned by Gods laws, the evil of divine indignation, 1 *Joh.* 3. 21, 22, Nay, ſaith Conſcience, whatever be the charges laid againſt him, or croſſes lay before him: *Who is he that condemneth? it is God that juſtifieth? In all theſe things I am more than a conquerour through him that loved me*, Rom. 8. 31.----to the end. 2. From evils thrown upon him by mens luſts, the evils of humane imputations and hard cenſures. Amidſt all calumnies Conſcience acquits *Job*, and aſſerts his integrity. Let his adverſaries write a book againſt him, he can bind their cenſures as a crown unto him. Let them reproach him of hypocriſie, *Yet*, ſaith he, *till I die I will not remove my integrity from me. My righteouſneſs I hold faſt and will not let it go. My heart ſhall not reproach me, ſo long as I live*, Job 31. 5. to the end, 27. 5, 6.

2. If the eſtate or actions be, or have been bad, Conſcience is by office judicially to accuſe and condemn. I ſay *judicially* to accuſe, becauſe it's accuſation, *per modum teſtis*, as a witneſs, appertaineth to the ſecond Propoſition. Thus it likewiſe doth,

(1.) As to and before God; to and before whom it accuſeth us, and cauſeth us to ac-

knowledg our guilt. Thus *Davids* heart ſmote him after he had numbred the people, and *David* ſaid unto the Lord, *I have ſinned greatly in that I have done, &c.* 2 Sam. 24. 10. And after he had gone in to *Bathſheba*, *Againſt thee, thee only I have ſinned, and done this evil in thy ſight, &c.* Pſal. 51. 4.

(2.) As from and under God; who is greater than the Conſcience. So Conſcience is by office. 1. To convict the ſinner, and doth conclude it as to the ſinful ſtate and actions, for which it ſtands arraigned before it: Witneſs thoſe *Jews*, *Joh.* 8. 9. Who were convicted by their own Conſciences, ἐλεγχόμενοι *. So ſhut up by arguments, and by the authority of this Judg, that they could not ſtart from it. 2. To cenſure and ſet a brand and mark of infamy upon the ſin. So *David* in the Text before, 2 *Sam.* 24. 10. *I have done very fooliſhly.* And elſewhere, *So fooliſh was I and ignorant, I was a beaſt before thee*, Pſal. 73. 22. Here the leaſt Conſcience as a Judg can do, is diſlike and diſplicence with the ſin, and with it ſelf for ſin. *The evil which I do I allow not*, ſaith *Paul*, Rom. 7. 15. 3. To condemn, 1 *Joh.* 3. 20. *i.e.* to pronounce the ſentence, which is a ſentence of condemnation to the ſinner, where the eſtate is bad, whereof is no reverſal, but upon repentance, *Act.* 2. 37, 38. *Tit.* 3. 11. A ſentence of caſtigation, and to contrition, where the eſtate is good, *Jer.* 31. 19. and is ſtill a ſentence of condemnation to the ſin, and for the crucifying of the ſame, whether the eſtate be good or bad, *Lam.* 3. 39, 40, 41.

* *Significat* ἐλέγχειν *convincere & cauſam ed deducere, ut objicienti præterea nihil amplius queat.* Hyperius.

Second-

Secondly, as it reſpects time future, and what is to be. Thus Conſcience is by office, in particular; not only, 1. to tell us or hold forth what is right and what is wrong, what is good and what is evil, to us in particular, agreeable to the general law in the firſt Propoſition. But 2. to tye and oblige us reſpectively to that evil, and to this good, agreeably ſtill to the ſame law in the ſame propoſition. And 3. to thruſt forward, excite or impell us, for the avoiding of that evil, and for the attaining or doing of this good; with accord ſtill to that general light or law. In relation to theſe Offices, the holy Scriptures ſpeaks of the Conſcientious man, as one ſtirred, as one bound, as one preſſed in his own ſpirit, *Act.* 17. 16, 18. 5. 20, 22. He is not only a debtor, *Rom.* 1. 14. But there is a neceſſity upon him, as from Gods command, ſo from his own Conſcience. He is conſtrained and cannot chuſe (unleſs he ſhould offer violence to his own Conſcience) but do, what his Conſcience dictates, 1 *Cor.* 9, 16. 2 *Cor.* 5. 14. *Act.* 4. 20.

I am not ignorant, that theſe three laſt Offices of Conſcience are commonly placed elſewhere, and conceived to appertain rather to the firſt Propoſition. But in that Conſcience doth therein dictate but the general right or law, and theſe acts do evidently include a particular reſpect and application to a mans own eſtate or action, and this concluſive as to his eſtate and action: As the operation of Conſcience aforeſaid doth obviouſly witneſs. I do therefore rather chuſe to place them here. Not

that I blame others for the liberty which they pleaſe to take; nor ſhall bind up my ſelf ſtrictly this order, in the progreſs of this Diſcourſe.

Q. 7. *How may and ſhould we ſo order our Conſcience (in relation to the firſt Propoſition) that they offer us true and right Laws and Rules, and none but ſuch concerning our eſtates* and actions?*

* See Q. 3. Direct. 1. in Chap. 3.

To this end it is neceſſary, that you

Direct. 1. 1. Store your Conſcience, that ſhe have a ſtock and treaſury of knowledg, a bank and habit of all neceſſary laws and rules of practice; that as a ſcribe inſtructed to the Kingdom, ſhe may bring forth out of her treaſury things both new and old, as any occaſion offers. For how ſhall ſhe be able to give rules, if ſhe hath them not? or teach you, if her ſelf be untaught? *If the blind lead the blind, they both fall into the ditch*, *Mat.* 13. 52. *Rom.* 2. 21. *Mat.* 15. 14. Therefore (1.) apply your hearts to inſtruction, (not your ears, or eyes, or heads only, but your hearts) in the uſe of Scriptures, and of all ſubſervient helps and means which God hath appointed for the attaining and advancement of ſound knowledg, *Prov.* 2. 2. 23. 12. *Pſal.* 90. 12, Excite and engage the purſuits and deſires of thine heart, the determinate purpoſes of thy will. See thou be not willingly ignorant; hear inſtruction, and refuſe it not. Be daily at Wiſdoms-gates, wait at the poſts of her doors. Lo, now you have a promiſe,

if

if you apply your hearts to its purſuance, *Prov.* 18. 1. 2 *Pet.* 3. 5. *Prov.* 8. 33, 34, 35. 2. 2.-11-10, (2.) Let inſtruction abide upon your hearts. What is it to furniſh a common-place-book with what thou readeſt and heareſt? furniſh Conſcience rather: At leaſt, tranſcribe thy Notes from thy Books into thy breaſt. Nor think it enough, that thou haſt apt rules for all Caſes in thy Bible, they muſt be nearer hand too, in thy boſom. Write them upon the table of thine heart. Hear what God ſpeaketh to thee, *Let thine heart retain my words: Let thine heart keep my Commandments; keep them in the midſt of thine heart*, Prov. 3. 3. c. 7. 3. c. 4. 4, 21. c. 3. 1. *Thy word have I hid in mine heart*, ſaith *David*, *that I might not ſin againſt thee.* To this is the promiſe of knowledg; and thou mayſt be confident, that when *wiſdom entereth into the heart*; *Diſcretion ſhall preſerve thee*, *underſtanding ſhall keep thee*, *Pſal.* 119. 11. *Prov.* 2. 1, 5. c. 2. 10, 11.

2. Stay your Conſcience from the evils to which ſhe is incident, and the extreams wherewith ſhe is often intangled: Eſpecially ſtay her from theſe evils, (1.) The affectation and itch of ſingularity and ſcience falſly ſo called; as alſo of curious and unprofitable queſtions, humane traditions, *&c.* For theſe will but bring her into ſnares, bewray her to Satan, feed her diſeaſe and ſickneſs, and fetch her off from the divine ſimplicity, which the Scriptures uſe in the Doctrine which is according to godlineſs, 1 *Tim.* 6. 3, 4, 5, 20, 21. *Tit.* 1. 14. *Mat.* 15. 9. 2 *Cor.* 11. 3. (2.) From ambiating and indulging *Direct.* 2.

dulging a carnal liberty, which will not be either checkt, or confined by the reſtraint of law and rules, *Pſal.* 2. 3. 12. 4. 'Tis true, where the ſpirit of the Lord is, there is liberty: And that ye are called unto liberty; but not ſuch as ſerves the intereſs and inclinations of the fleſh, or ſnaps aſunder bonds of obedience. Still you are the ſervants of God; and ſo are under a law of liberty. His precepts are Gyves upon your luſts, but give you liberty. If Conſcience aſpires after a carnal liberty, ſhe is in hazard of the moſt lamentable captivity, 2 *Cor.* 3. 17. *Gal.* 5. 17. 1 *Pet.* 2. 16. *Jam.* 1. 25. 2 *Pet.* 2. 19. (3.) From arrogance; either in juſtifying her ſelf; as if ſhe knew enough already. This will precipitate and out-law Conſcience, perverts and overthrows knowledg, prevents and obviates all care and endeavour for its improvement and encreaſe, *Rom.* 1. 22. 1 *Cor.* 3. 18. 2 *Cor.* 8. 2. *Prov.* 26. 12. Or in impoſing on your ſelves. The rules ſhe dictateth may not be without (much leſs againſt) the revelation or direction of God. She is not *Sarah* the Miſtreſs, but *Hagar* an handmaid; under God, though above you; and is to conſerve and manifeſt rules to you, not to create and make rules for you. (4.) From inordinate haſte, to which ſhe is oft-times too prone, and by which ſhe is often-times perverted, both in the determining and dictating of rules. Let not thine heart be haſty. Bid thy Conſcience (as the Levite did the Children of *Iſrael*), conſider and take advice firſt, and then ſpeak her mind, that thou mayſt be able

to

to ſay with the Preacher, *For all this, I conſidered in mine heart*, Eccleſ. 5. 2. Judg. 19. 30. Pſal. 50. 22. Eccleſ. 6. 1.

3. Sift your Conſciences, and put your caſe to the queſtion in them. (1.) Sift what rules have they in this caſe. 'Twill actuate ſleepy habits, and awaken Conſcience to attend your ſeveral affairs; therefore the Apoſtle doth often appeal Conſcience thus, *What! know ye not? i.e.* do not your Conſciences tell ye this and that? *Rom.* 6. 3, 16. 7. 1. 1 *Cor.* 3. 16, 17. 5. 6. 6. 2, 3, 9, 15, 16, 19. 9. 13, 24. (2.) Sift them by their rule. Thou ſayeſt, this is your rule: But tell me, ⊙ my Conſcience, doth the law of my God ſay ſo too? Where hath he revealed it? where read'ſt thou it? where is it written? in the book of Nature, or of Scripture? ſhew it me; for why ſhouldſt thou meaſure thy ſelf by thy ſelf? And if thou bind the law continually upon thy heart, behold God hath aſſured thee, *When thou goeſt it ſhall lead thee; when thou ſleepeſt it ſhall keep thee; and when thou awakeſt it ſhall talk with thee*, *Luk.* 10. 26. 2 *Corinth.* 10. 12. *Prov.* 6. 21, 22. (3.) Sift them before their Ruler; hath not God written to thee, O my Conſcience, excellent things in counſel and knowledg, that thou mighteſt know the certainty of the words of truth? Wilt thou ſay, this is the truth, as in his ſight? Hath he not ſet thee up as a Preacher in my boſom, to receive the Law at his mouth, and cauſe me to hear his words? and wilt thou (Oh! do not) propheſie deceits, and ſpeak the viſions of thine own heart, and *Direct.* 4.

and ſay he ſent me, as the falſe Prophets ſometimes did? *Behold he knoweth what is in the darkneſs, and the light dwelleth with him*, Prov. 22. 20, 21. Rom. 9. 1. Jer. 23. 16, *&c.* Dan. 2. 22.

Direct. 4. 4. Speak to your Conſciences; If they are ſlack in determining, or ſlow in dictating general rules, quicken and call them to their work. It may be, ſhe is ſilent and doth not ſpeak to thee, becauſe thou art ſilent, and doſt not ſpeak to her. Set to thine heart, as the Preacher ſaith, he did, *Jer.* 5. 24. *Eccleſ.* 9. 1. Urge her from 1. thy neceſſity of a rule in this caſe; 2. from the nature of a rule, which ſhould be known and clear; 3. from her nature and office, who is to receive the rule from the ſupream Legiſlator, and reveal it to thee, 4. from the notoriety of that account, which ſhe muſt one day render unto him.

Direct. 5. 5. Speak to God for your Conſcience. Sincere prayer is of no ſmall prevalence in this caſe: It giveth up Conſcience into the hands of God its ruler, and getteth down grace for the accompliſhment of Conſcience with rules. Beg God, 1. to inſtruct thy Conſcience, that he will open thine eyes, and not hide his Commandments from thee; that he teach thee in the way of his ſtatutes, and give thee an underſtanding that thou maiſt know his teſtimonies, ſo *David*; and with *Job* ſay to him, *That which I know not teach thou me*, Pſal. 119. 18, 19, 33, 34, 125. *Job* 34. 22. 2. To incline and eſtabliſh thy Conſcience. *O! let me not wander from thy Commandments: Make me to*

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go in the path of thy Commandments. Encline my heart to thy teſtimonies. Let my heart be found in thy ſtatutes, Pſal. 119. 10, 35, 36. 80.

6. Spend more of your time in conſideration. This will concoct what you already know, and convert it into blood and ſpirits. It improveth both the quickneſs and clearneſs of Conſcience, while truths are revolved upon the heart, and it runs them over again with freſh attention and intention of the ſeveral faculties. The moſt conſiderate Chriſtian is the moſt knowing, and beſt thriveth in his Conſcience. Her miſcarriages are the iſſue of inconſiderateneſs, *Pſal.* 1. 1, 2. 64. 9. *Eccleſ.* 5. 1. The iterated acts of meditation will 1. habituate the principles which you already know; 'twill root them deeper, and rivet them faſter upon the mind and memory. And Conſcience will be ever and anon calling them into counſel, *Pſal.* 119. 15, 16, 23, 24. 2. They'l affect and pour in oyl upon the flames of love, delight and deſire toward theſe and ſuch other principles: *O how love I thy law!* ſaith *David.* What was it that kindled and cauſed it to burn up to ſuch an height? *It is my meditation all the day*, Pſal. 119. 15, 16, 48, 97. 3. They'l advance theſe principles to an higher progreſs and proficiency in knowledg. Meditation will not only be dilating on them; but deducing inferences from them, and drawing on the judgment and conſcience from one field of truth to another for the delicious views of the full harveſt of divine verities, having drunk in ſo much *Direct.* 6.

much ſweetneſs already from a few ſheaves of it. This was it inlarged *David's* underſtanding beyond his teachers, and above the ancients, as well as above his enemies: *Thy teſtimonies are my meditation*, Pſal. 119. 98, 99, 100.

Direct. 7. Laſtly, Sin not againſt your Conſcience; but render your ſelves conformable to what rules ſhe giveth. Some men ſin againſt her rules, till they have ſinned away her rules; till God and Conſcience give them over to their own luſts, inſtead of giving them out his laws: That as they loved to reſtrain the truth in unrighteouſneſs, and liked not to retain God in their knowledg; they ſhall run where they liſt, for a time, with a reprobate and remorſleſs Conſcience, *Pſal.* 81. 11, 12. *Iſa.* 6. 9, 10, 11. *Rom.* 1. 18, 21, 24, 28. But Sirs, if you would have Conſcience true in giving rules to you, you muſt be true to the rules which Conſcience gives you; you encourage Conſcience when you exemplifie her laws in your lives and converſations: But if you turn not her directions into duties, you tempt her to deal (at moſt) but by halves with you, as you do (at beſt) with her. The doers of the Commandments have the moſt diſcerning Conſcience, and dwell moſt in comforts. *If ye know theſe things, happy are ye if ye do them.* He that doth what he knoweth is moſt likely to know what to do. He is ſecured by promiſe. If any man will do his will, he ſhall know of the doctrine, and God will manifeſt himſelf to him, *Pſ.* 111. 10. *Joh.* 13. 17. 7. 17. 14. 21.

Q. 6.

Q. 8. *How ſhould we ſo order our Conſcience (in relation to the ſecond Propoſition) that ſhe may give us a true and right teſtimony, and none but ſuch, concerning our eſtates * and actions?* * See Chap. 3. Q. 3. Dir. 2.

To this end it is neceſſary, That you

1. Ply your Conſcience with arguments. *Direct.* 1. The influence of rational inducements with her cannot be ſmall, in that her ſeat and fixation is in the very higheſt orb of reaſon. So that the more reaſons you offer, the more ready muſt ſhe be (*cæteris paribus*) to her office, and the more regular in her operations. You may urge her (1) from her ability. Thou, and thou only under God, canſt fully and clearly teſtifie. For what man knoweth the things of a man, ſave the ſpirit of a man which is in him? God hath ſet thee up, as a ſhining lamp, for ſurveying all the ſeveral periods and acts of my life, and thou ſearcheſt all the inward parts of the (heart, metaphorically expreſſed by the) belly, 1 *Cor.* 2. 11. *Prov.* 2. 27. (2.) From her authority. For this art thou conſtituted by God in and over me. And this is his command upon thee, to teſtifie what is my conſonancy to, or diſſonancy from thoſe laws he hath impoſed on, or engraven in me. Thou haſt his warrant, and 'tis thy work to witneſs, a work approved by him in Scripture, and agreeable to thy nature. Who can exempt? or what ſhall excuſe thee? *Rom.* 2. 15. (3.) From her avail. Thy ſingle teſtimony alone doth ſupercede

cede the witneſs of the whole world beſides. I can appeal from them to thee; but from thee I can appeal to none but God. Next under his, thy witneſs is of higheſt weight, both with him and me, *Job* 23. 10, 11, 12. *Rom.* 9. 1. (4.) From her acts: Why didſt thou dictate truths and laws to me, if thou wilt deny thy teſtimony to my life? By thoſe I know what God appointeth, and demandeth of me; but 'tis by this alone, I can know what I am, and what is done by me. Should I know his ſtatutes only? or ſhould I not alſo know my own ſelf, 2 *Cor.* 13. 5. Beſides, how canſt thou otherwiſe deſcend to judgment? who paſſeth ſentence without ſome previous evidence? And if this be unſound, that cannot be ſafe. So that deny or deprave thy witneſs, and thou undoeſt thy whole work. (5.) From her advantage. Witneſs thou muſt, and ſhalt. Now it may be done with leſs ſmart, and more ſecurity, then if thou ſhouldſt defer it till the cords of diſtreſs, or fetters of death and judgment do conſtrain thee. (6.) From her account. An account thou muſt render at Gods Bar ſhortly. He will then open the book of Conſcience, and every line of thy heart and life ſhall be read over diſtinctly. He now obſerveth, what reflections and reports Conſcience maketh of what hath been done by thee, and hath eminently marked out her ſilence, as a ſore evil in thee, *Jer.* 8. 6. *Eccleſ.* 4. 8. (7) From what attends. Why? O my Conſcience! my work and welfare, both as to time and eternity, do all turn upon this one hinge. How

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can I repent either from or for my paſt or preſent ſins, or ſtate, if ſinful, on the one hand? Or how can I rejoyce in, or be thankful for my paſt or preſent ſincerity, and Gods ſalvation on the other; if thy ſilence or partiality in giving witneſs ſhall leave me ſtill under the thick and dark vail of ignorance?

2. Preſs her by and before authority. Sub- *Direct.* 2.
pœna her to appear at Gods Bar, and there argue with her, *Pſal.* 50. 22. *Jer.* 12. 3. Art thou not (1) to witneſs from him? hath not he ſubſtituted and ſent thee? How wilt thou anſwer it to him then, whom thou abuſeſt infinitely, if thou adventure either to ſuſpend thy teſtimony, or to ſpeak untruly. (2) Art thou not to witneſs for him? *i.e.* in his cauſe and concern, as well as on his commiſſion? Durſt thou ſo ſlight his honour, and therewith thine obligations, as either to ſpeak wickedly for him, or to be ſpeechleſs, or ſhuffle in thy witneſs, when the intereſs of his government, glory, &c. is at ſtake before thee? ſhall not his excellency make thee afraid? *Job* 13. 7, 8, 9. (3) Art thou not to witneſs to him? Doth thy teſtimony terminate with me? Nay 'tis tranſmitted to the ſupream Judg. The records of it muſt lie in heaven with him. And canſt thou impoſe, by lying, upon an infinite truth? or hide any thing by a looſe and fraudulent teſtimony from his immenſity? (4) Art thou not to witneſs as before God? As of God, in the ſight of God, ſo ſhouldſt thou ſpeak. The anſwer of a good Conſcience is towards God. Whether it be right in the ſight of God is her grand

grand enquiry. And durſt thou withhold or wrench and obtort thy teſtimony before his eye? ſhoud not his preſence better poyze, and be of more prevalence with thee? 2 *Cor.*2.17. 1 *Pet.* 3. 21. *Act.* 4. 19. (5) And what is God from, for, to and before whom thou art to witneſs? Doth not he know both all the matters of fact, and all thy manifold frauds, with the higheſt exactneſs? Thy witneſs cannot add to, nor thy wreſtings abate from his knowledg, *Jer.* 17. 9, 10. *Pſal.* 119. 168. Or will he cover either, becauſe thou concealeſt them, or caſtes a vail over them. Nay if thou ſayeſt, Behold, I know it not; Doth not he that pondereth the heart conſider it? and he that keepeth thy ſoul, doth not he know it? And ſhall not he render to every man according to his works. *Prov.* 12. 24.

*Direct.*3. 3. Purge out that habitual guil and averſation, which naturally adhereth to her, (of which elſewhere, (*Chap.*2. *Qu.*2.) and principle her with holy habits. Purity will be an excellent preſervative from the temptations proffered her from without, and the treachery ſhe is prone to from within. As for the pure his work is right: The witneſs of a pure Conſcience will not be blinded with, or blinded by any carnal intereſs; 'twill continue pure like her ſelf, 2 *Tim.* 1.3. *Prov.* 21.8. *Tit.*1. 15. Fidelity is not leſs effectual then expedient and neceſſary. She will not be either bought off by temptations, or brow-beaten by trouble, nor will ſhe bruiſe upon the truth, or baffle in her teſtimony. *A faithful witneſs will not*

not lie. A true witneſs delivereth ſouls, Prov. 14. 5, 25. *Chap.* 12. 17.

4. Prevent her from allurements. There will be enough to tamper with her, and be taking her off from her teſtimony. 1. Self-love will be prompting arguments, from thy own eaſe, &c. to abſtain, or however to adjourn, or (at leaſt) to allay her teſtimony. 2. Secret luſts will be putting in for ſome countenance, at leaſt, connivance. Why ſhouldſt thou make a full diſcovery? Look back upon the profits and pleaſures we have miniſtred to thee; ſhall thine own teſtimony deſtroy both ours, and thine own tranquillity? 3. Satan will be pleading and perſwading with thee, either to paſs it over, or palliate it up, or at leaſt to put it off, to a more convenient ſeaſon. Nay 4. the ſeveral powers of the Soul which are ſubordinated to Conſcience, and muſt ſenſe the conſequence of a juſt and impartial teſtimony, will be plucking her back, and preſs her to a forbearance, from the extent and fearful effects of a ſevere teſtimony. Why ſhouldſt thou ſo far prejudice the peace of thy ſelf and us, who have taken ſweet counſel together heretofore? Come, ſpare thy ſelf and us, at leaſt, a little longer. Thorns and ſnares, thou ſeeſt, are ſtrew'd in the way of Conſcience's witneſs-bearing. The more it concerns thee to keep her with thy utmoſt circumſpection. Suffer her not to play with theſe baits, as thou wouldſt not have her periſh by the hook, that is hid under them. *Prov.* 4. 23. *Chap.* 22. 5. *Act.* 24. 16. Let Conſcience know 1. allure- *Direct.* 4.

ments are fallacious and deceitful; they are but to betray her from her irkſome duty into the more irrecoverable danger. And however they now briskly ſparkle in the cup and entrance, yet in the conſequence and end they will bite like a Serpent, they will ſting like an adder. 2. Their arguments are all frivolous and ſophiſtical. The true ſpiritual ſelf-love eaſily ſeeth through, and ſcattereth them all. She ſeeth that the witneſs of Conſcience ſerves our beſt welfare and comfort: And if troubles enſue upon her teſtimony, ſhe will ſee and ſay they are but preparatory to our everlaſting tranquillity, and preventive of eternal torments: Or ſuppoſe the worſt, if you weigh their ſuggeſtions in the ſcales of ſelf-love indeed, ſhe will ſoon inform you, 'Tis better to bleed once, than to burn for ever: Better you ſhould ſmart once, than ſuffer always: Better Conſcience ſhould be giving witneſs on earth, than be a gnawing worm in hell: To be now teſtifying, than for ever tormenting, &c. *Luk.* 16. 23, 24, 25.

Direct. 5. 5. Prize her atteſtation, and be well pleaſed with it, Receive her teſtimony with thankfulneſs to God, and tenderneſs toward her; yea, though her teſtimony ſhould give check to your carnal intereſt, and corrupt inclinations; yet congratulate, and bid her welcome when ſhe bears her witneſs; as *David* ſometime did *Abigail*, *Bleſſed be the Lord, which ſent thee to meet me this day; and bleſſed be thy advice, and bleſſed be thou of the Lord,* 1 *Sam.* 25. 32, 33. 'Tis good for you (1) to invite

invite her, and that in ſincerity, if ſhe ſeems ſtrange. There is a ſaying to the heart which the Scripture ſuggeſts to us, *Hoſ.*7.2. If Conſcience ſeems to withdraw, ſpeak to her the more winningly; and ſay not to thy ſelf by her, as *Judah* did to his ſervant, concerning *Tamar*, *Let her alone, enquire not after her, leſt we be aſhamed*, Gen. 38.23. But ſee that thou do it in integrity. Do not invite her, as *Amnon* did his Siſter, to deflowre her teſtimony firſt, and then turn her out of doors afterward. 2 *Sam.* 13. 17. (2) Entertain her with promiſes of ſecurity, if ſhe ſeems ſuſpicious and fearful. Tell her thou wilt bear with, and ſhalt bleſs God for her integrity, and wilt bear her out againſt her enemies; As *David* to *Abiathar*, *Abide thou with me, fear not; for he that ſeeketh thy life ſeeketh my life: But with me thou ſhalt be in ſafety*, 1 Sam. 22.23. (3) Encourage her, if ſhe yet ſeems ſhy and doubtful; as *Moſes* was to encourage *Joſhua*; and as God encouraged *Paul*, *Be of good cheer, Paul, as thou haſt teſtified of me in Jeruſalem, ſo thou muſt bear witneſs alſo at Rome.* Speak out freely, fully, faithfully, I ſhall not oppoſe, but own it thankfully: Tell her as wiſdom doth her Children, *With me thou ſhalt dwell in ſafety, and ſhalt be quiet from fear of evil*, Deut. 5.38. Act.23.11. Prov. 1. 33. Receive her teſtimony then, and that in reality, and with all readineſs; whereby you ſhall eminently diſappoint the hopes of ſin and Satan, and encourage her to the diſcharge of her office. You receive the witneſs of men, the witneſs of God is greater; and

the witneſs of Conſcience is Gods witneſs in and to you; 'tis the candle of the Lord. 1 *Joh.* 5. 9. *Prov.* 20. 27. Be ſure 1. you do not menace her from giving *teſtimony*; as *Amariah* did the Prophet, *Art thou of the Kings counſel? forbear, why ſhouldſt thou be ſmitten?* Leſt ſhe forbear indeed, as the Prophet did to his deſtruction, 2 *Chron.* 25. 16, 2. Nor ſmite her for giving teſtimony, as *Balaam* did his Aſſe, when ſhe rebuked his madneſs; leſt the Angel of the Lord ſlay thee for ſmiting her, as he was like to have ſlain him: Nor as *Ahab* and *Zedekiah* did by *Micajah*, and died miſerably. *Numb.* 22, 22.——34. 1 *King.* 22. 15.——38. 3. Nor mince the teſtimony ſhe giveth, leſt thou become odious to Conſcience, as *Hanan* to *David*; while thou cut'ſt off her teſtimony, as *Hanan* did his Meſſengers garments in the midſt, hard by their Buttocks, and ſhe revenge this ſhame upon thee as *David* did that with blood and ſlaughter. 1 *Chron.* 19. 4---16.

Direct. 6. 6. Put her upon action, and proceed with her throughout this whole action, with thy moſt provident attention, and circumſpection. There are three offices which appertain to Conſcience, (as hath been proved Q. 6.), that you are ſtrictly to attend, as you would have her witneſs aright and truly; *viz.* ſhe is to record, to reflect, to report. The report of Conſcience, which is the conſummation of her office in witneſſing, is raiſed upon, and reſults from the two former acts, which include the inchoation and progreſs of her witneſſing: Her witneſs

witneſs is reſting as in habit with her, if we reſpect the firſt office, and is now a reducing into act by her, with reſpect to the ſecond. So that as ever you would have Conſcience report or finiſh her teſtimony aright, whether as concerns your paſt eſtate or actions; your eminent care is required in and touching the two former, (wherein I ſhall more particularly direct you, and in the next Queſtion which you ſhould premiſe); I ſay *paſt*, becauſe in the teſtimony of Conſcience touching things preſent, this gradual paſſage, from one act to another, is not ſo obſervable.

Q. 9. *What courſe ſhould we take touching the recording of things by our Conſcience, in order to their giving a right witneſs?*

To this I can ſay but little here [for the conſulting and review of her Records belongs to the next Queſtion, *Direct.* 1.] Touching the due compiling of them, I ſhall only offer two things, in the caſe. 1. What ſhe doth do, as a motive to incite you. 2. What you ſhould do, as that which may inſtruct you.

1. Remember what ſhe doth. She doth, *Direct:* 1; and cannot but record thy actions, though thou careſt not (happily) to reflect on, or attend to it. Such is her relation unto God, as being his regiſter and notary. So that they are all written before him; yea, laid up in ſtore with him, and ſealed up among his treaſures. *Iſa.* 65. 6. *Deut.* 32. 34. And ſuch is her relation withal to thee. Conſcience is one

of thoſe books the Scripture ſpeaks of, and thou ſhalt be judged out of thoſe things which are written in this Book, according to thy works. *Dan.*7.10. *Rev.* 20. 12. She books down thy actions then, and that truly and thorowly. And though through the darkneſs of miſts without, and of the mind within thou canſt not now diſcern all her prints and characters; yet in the light of ſome grievous diſtreſs, or ſelf-diſcuſſion, thou mayſt diſcover ſome of them, (as *Joſephs* Brethren and *David* did. *Gen.* 42.21. *Pſal.* 77. 6.) and in the light of that great day, they will all be diſcovered. And thoſe Letters on it which now ſeem inviſible and illegible, like Letters written with the juice of a Lemon, will be then clear, when it is brought to the fire of Gods judgment, 1 *Cor.* 4. 5. Yea, as ſhe records them 1. impartially; ſo likewiſe 2. indelibly. Her records are written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a Diamond, they are graven upon the table of thine heart; ſo that there is no obliterating, or razing them out. *Jer.* 17. 1.

Direct. 2. 2. Remember what you ſhould do. 1. Take care that Conſcience record things as legibly as ſhe can; whereby when you reflect, you ſhall read them over, with leſs averſation, and more attention. To this end 1. Circumſpection is requiſite on your part, not only as to the matter of her records, but as to the manner alſo; that you may not loſe the end of this act or work, by the intricacy of her hand-writing: *In all things that I have ſaid unto*

to you be circumſpect. Exod. 23. 13. Pſal. 119. 9. 2. Knowledg and confidence are requiſite on her part, wherewith it ſhould be your care to furniſh her knowledg; leſt ſhe record virtue for vice, as *Abimelech*, Gen. 20. 5, 6. or vice for virtue, as thoſe, *Prov.* 16. 25. *Iſa.* 5. 20. Confidence; for if ſhe writes with a trembling and palſie-hand, ſhe is like to write (if truly, yet) illegibly and leſs accurately. If you menace her, you do but make her write in Characters which you cannot underſtand, without a key to them. Record ſhe will, but ſo as you ſhall not read them who attempt to rend them, as we have clear inſtance, *Rom.* 1. 18. *to the end.* Give her confidence, and you ſhall not go away without a good accompt. She never records with more clearneſs to us, than when ſhe is treated with moſt confidence by us, *Heb.* 10 22, 23. (2) Take care to keep theſe records as legible as you can. Men are but too prone to blur and ſully them; either through ſenſuality, they themſelves contract blots and filth upon them; or through ſupineſs they ſuffer others to cloud and blemiſh them. And ſo when Conſcience ſhould be reporting them, men are to ſeek how they ſhould read them. Some let the duſt of ſecular vanities cover them. So did *Pharaohs* Butler for ſome years; as if the records of his Conſcience were to reſt there, rather as in a grave then as in a Court of Record, *Gen.* 41. 1. *cum* 9. Others let the copperas and gall-nuts, or ink of ſin to continue on and canker them. So did *David* for near an whole

year together, till *Nathan* revives their legibleneſs, and reads them over to him, 2 *Sam.* 2. 13, 15. Others let the worms and moths of Satans temptations corrupt them, as did thoſe *Epheſ.* 2. 2, 3. Your care then ſhould be 1. to lock them up in a ſafe repoſitory; 2. To look after them, ſo as neither the defilements of ſin, or duſts of ſenſe, or devices of Satan may reach, at leaſt reſt upon them. 3. To look that they be always in readineſs, that they be not to ſeek when you ſhould be ſurveighing them.

Q. 10. *What courſe ſhould we take in and about the reflections of our Conſcience, that they may give us a true and right witneſs?*

In the reflection which Conſcience maketh (at leaſt of actions paſt) ſhe caſteth back an eye upon two things; upon her own records, which are repoſited with the memory, which ſpeaks back what our actions either be, or have been; and upon thoſe holy rules, which are repoſited with the mind or συνλήρησις, which ſpeaks back what they ſhould have been, or now ſhould be. So that Conſcience in her reflection is both to conſult her own records, and to compare the concern before her, wherein ſhe is, to witneſs with thoſe holy rules. I adviſe then, that you

Direct. 1. 1. Send your Conſcience to ſearch her own Records. Here her actions are all bookt (as before, Q. 9.) let her reflect hither, remember

and

and read them over, without which you cannot now reach the end, or reap the benefit, of their being ſo repoſited. *Remember this*, how they are enrolled, and why, *Call it again to mind, O ye tranſgreſſors*; to uſe the words of the Prophet, *Iſa.* 46. 8. Now that you may conſult theſe records aright, and have Conſcience to reflect; Its requiſite that there be (1) Self-denial, without which this work will not be done at all, or not aright; but Conſcience like the unjuſt Steward will be writing fifty for an hundred. For be ſure your wills and affections, yea Conſcience it ſelf (through the corruption that cleaves to it) will be drawing back from ſuch a difficult and fleſh-diſpleaſing work; or at moſt will not dwell long upon it. And therefore the Apoſtle doubleth the charge: Examine your ſelves, prove your own ſelves; as knowing how hardly we are brought to it, and how the heart hangs back from it, *Luk.* 16. 6. 2 *Cor.* 13. 5. (2) Serious deliberation, leſt you miſread and miſunderſtand her records, and the reſult be a miſtake and miſrepreſentation of your caſe; which will miniſter nothing but matter for repentance, as it did unto *David*, *I ſaid in my haſte, &c.* Pſal. 31. 22. and 116. 11. (3) A ſteady diligence; *My ſpirit made diligent ſearch*, Pſal. 77. 6. 1. In rubbing up and ranſacking the memory, where theſe records lie, as in their moſt proper repoſitory. For many of our actions lie there, rather as ſo much rubbiſh which we have ſwept out of ſight, then as ſo many records that are orderly

orderly shelv'd up for a surveigh. 2. In reiterating this method, our actions many times lie so far off, and so many things interpose between them and the eye of Conscience, that there must be a raised and repeated diligence; yea and giving all diligence, to remove other matters, and to reduce them again to our minds. 'Tis therefore called a bringing back to the heart, 2 *Pet.* 1. 10. 1 *King.* 8. 47. *Isa.* 46. 8. 3. In the reception and right nicking of the means. The court of records stands not always open; and 'tis ill slipping the first season. Now diligence would be doing e're the doors are shut; and the draught by Conscience is yet fresh and unsullied: As *David* sometimes immediately reflected, upon the cutting off of *Sauls* garment, and upon his numbring the people. But at another time, when he yields to his own sloth, and falls not in with the first season, *Uriah* is murdered, and his Wife constuprated by him, &c. and he never casts a reflex upon either of these prodigious acts; yea notwithstanding the Parable came so pat and plain upon him, till the Prophet was fain to put himself in the place of Conscience, and tell him, *Thou art the man*; and you know what this negligence cost him, 1 *Sam.* 24. 5. 2 *Sam.* 24. 10. *Chap.* 11, *and* 12. *Psal.* 51.

Direct. 2. 2. Set Conscience by those holy rules, whereon she must reflect. The rule is of necessary reflection on, and of as needful resolution, in witness-bearing: For how shall Conscience witness or reflect on this as good, or

on

on that as good? but by comparing this and that with the rule, which can alone reſolve her what is good and what is bad. Now as Gods revealed will is the only rule and meaſure of all moral good and evil; ſo the reflection of Conſcience connoteth a reſpect to this rule. For Conſcience doth not caſt back an enquiry after the phyſical being of an action; as whether I have eat or drunk? but after the moral being of that action, as whether I have eat or drunk to Gods glory, &c. as his law enjoyns me; or elſe to exceſs, &c. as his law inhibits me? *Mic.* 6. 8. 1 *Joh.* 3. 4. 1 *Cor.* 10. 31. *Eph.* 5. 18. Now hereunto theſe three things are requiſite; which though they are not of that obvious neceſſity and diſtinct uſe, in thoſe ſudden and tranſient reflections which Conſcience often maketh; yet are they of very needful obſervation and uſeful diſtinctneſs in her more ſolemn and abiding reflections in the more ſerious returns we are to make upon our ſelves as before the Sacrament, &c. or when we undertake the ſolemn examination of our ſelves.

1. Set the rule before thy Conſcience in its ſpiritual power, purity, and in the ſeveral parts of it. On this ſhe is to reflect, and by this ſhe muſt be regulated. 'Tis not enough that you have them lying in habit with the ſuntereſis, but they ſhould be now actually educed and brought forth to view. For in that you are now to ſearch your ſelves by them, you muſt take an actual ſurveigh of them.

them. *David* therefore did not ſatisfie himſelf that the laws of God were ever with him, but he did expoſe and lay them before him. *Thy judgments have I laid before me*, Pſal. 119. 30. *cum* 98. And without this, the courſe you are now taking will be much-what ineffectual, and can never be fully commenſurate with your deſign, this duty or Gods demand, who bids you take heed to your ways according to his word, *Pſal.* 119. 9.

2. Sift your Conſcience, and therewith your lives and actions, by the rules; compare her and them with this: Examine your ſelves, prove your own ſelves; δοκιμάζετε, as men try metals, by bringing them to their proper meaſure, as Gold and Silver to the touch-ſtone, 2 *Cor.* 13. 5. Self-diſcuſſion by the divine ſtandard is of ſingular advantage, both for the diſcovery of your ſins, as *David* and *Paul* found it, and for the drawing out a diſcovery of your ſincerity, as *Job*, *Pſ.* 19. 11, 12. *Rom.* 7. 8, 9, &c. *Job* 23. 10, 11. Will you but caſt an eye on this glaſs, you ſhould ſee more of the nature and number of your ſins; the nature, neceſſity, and beauty of Gods ſervice, and continuing therein, ſhould contract his bleſſing on your ſelves, *Jam.* 1. 25. But in your ſolemn examinations, let me adviſe you to call forth the laws of God, and rules of godlineſs ſucceſſively and diſtinctly, and ſo to compare the ſeveral periods of your lives with them, both in the matter and manner of your actions. Hath the matter of my life born accord to this, that, and the other precepts? or hath there not been an attempt on, and violation of both

both this and that, and the other prohibition? For the manner of my actions; have they been done upon that account, and with thoſe aimes, affections, &c. that theſe rules preſcribe me, and whereupon they promiſe a bleſſing to me? By this courſe, Conſcience will be 1. Leſs complicated in her work, through the artifices of ſin or Satan. They uſually hide their deceits under the covert of generals. This unravels all the clue. 2. More compleat in her witneſs. For by this means many of thoſe actions, which lay out of ſight upon her records, are ſuggeſted by and to Conſcience afreſh. 3 More cogent in her witneſs; and it being more particular, it will be more prevalent with us; when Conſcience can now ſay to us, as *Job*'s friends to him, *Lo this, I have ſearched it, ſo it is; hear then it, and know it for thy good*, Job 5. 27. 4. More conſtant in her witneſs, and more quick hence-forth and ready to her work. Her frequent converſes with theſe rules and comparings therewith, form her unto a more habitual promptneſs, and preſent activity to cheriſh good, and check evil, while 'tis yet but in the egg and entrance.

3. Stay thy Conſcience with the rule, and upon the reflections, which thou now makeſt. Let her not give a glance only, and ſo go off, but conſider, *(Hebr.) Set your heart on your ways*; as *David, I conſidered*; (Heb.) *I thoughted my ways, Hag.* 1. 5, 7. *Pſal.* 119. 59. By this means, if conſideration be taken up in making ſuch compariſons, your work will thrive upon your hands, to a greater extenſion and a more gracious

gracious intension. Consideration will fetch in the whole compass of Gods commands and our conversations. If Conscience reflect upon an evil, this will rip it up in all its circumstances, as it did in the Patriarchs and pious *David*; If upon a good this will run down its enquiry into the root and efficient of it, and then run it up again into the exemplar and end of it, and so returns fraught with repentance on that hand, with rejoycing on this, *Gen.* 42. 21, 22. *Psal.* 51. 3, 4, *&c.* 2 *Cor.* 4. 2. *c.* 2. 17. 1. 12. 'Tis necessary then that there should be some immoration of our Conscience, in an intent consideration, when we are imployed in these self-converses. The worth hereof is great; the efficacy of such reflections depending eminently thereupon. *David* thoughted his ways, and immediately turneth his feet to Gods word. The Preacher considers, and is forthwith cured of his trouble and tentation. Whereas others through inconsiderateness run on in sin, and some are held upon the rack of sorrow and anguish, *Psal.* 119. 59. *Eccles.* 9. 1. *Isa.* 1. 3. *Psal.* 73. 21, 22. Let me add a fourth.

4. Shake off whatsoever will retard you in, or retain you from this work. Sin and Satan will be suggesting disswasives and determents. Slothfulness will be sticking at the difficulty and diligence which must be used. The sensual and sensitive part will be startling and bogling at the displeasingness and danger of it, as that which will hazard all her ease and self-enjoyment. Yea, your selves will

will be but too ſhy of ſuch a duty, if you ſhake not off all ſuch inſinuations and ſuggeſtions, and ſet to it with all your might.

3. Speak to thy Conſcience that ſhe will reflect more conſtantly, or at leaſt, that ſhe will reckon with thee in the cloſe of every day. (1) That ſhe reflect more conſtantly. *Herein do I exerciſe my ſelf* (ſaith *Paul*) *to have always a Conſcience void of offence*, Act. 24. 16. And elſewhere he ſpeaks of it in the preſent tenſe, (Not we had, or ſhall have, but) we have a good Conſcience, *Heb.* 13. 18. And that is the good Conſcience which gives the quick reflex. It is true, I acknowledg, that your actions are quick and ſudden in their motions; but Conſcience is as quick and ſudden, and though thoſe may have gotten the ſtart of her as *Cuſhi* did of *Ahimaaz*; yet ſhe can eaſily overtake and out-run them, as *Ahimaaz* did *Cuſhi*; becauſe ſhe runneth (as he did) by the way of the Plain. There are many more things to interrupt their motion, than hers. Truth is, 1. When an action is yet but in purpoſe, or in the propoſal, Conſcience ſhould reflect immediately (as ſhe is capacitated accordingly) to promote it, if good, as in *Solomon*; or prevent it, if evil, as it did in *Joſeph*, 1 *King.* 5. 8. *Gen.* 39. 9. 2. Or when an action is paſſing from the inward intention to outward execution, Conſcience ſhould catch it by the heel, in the place of the breaking forth of Children, as *Jacob* did his Brother; and as being Gods Centinel, ſhould require its paſs and certificate, and remand it back, if it be *Direct.* 3.

it be bad, or rescue it from its assailants, if it be good as *Paul* did, *Hos.* 12. 3. *Rom.* 7. 15,---24. 3. Or is an action past forth, without her animadvertence? she should forthwith pursue it, and put the arrest of her reflection upon it; and be asking what have I done; Or ask us, as *Joab* ask'd *David*, *What hast thou done?* Jer. 8. 6. 2 *Sam.* 3. 24. To this end, labour for tenderness of Conscience (of which hereafter) which will soon reflect upon the least touch and pressure, 2 *King.* 22. 19. But alas! where is the Conscience that hath not abused us, more or less, in all these? who can say my heart is clean? therefore urge her (2) To reckon with thee, at least, in the close of every day. Conscience should be still every day, a doing with us; but there are two seasons in the day, wherein we especially should have to do with Conscience; *viz.* in the morning, that she may tell us what we have to do this day; and in the evening, that she tell us what we have done. *Commune with your own heart upon your bed*, Psal. 4. 4. 'Tis good communing with our selves, and speaking to Conscience, before we compose our selves to sleep. *Job* reflected every day upon the carriage of his Sons, and therefore (no doubt) upon the carriage of himself. Thus did *Job* continually (*Heb.*) all the days, *Job* 1. 5. This is the way to keep your accounts both more short, and more sure. Well, if conscience be shy or sullen, plead the cause with her as the very heathen could do *, and then put her to the question. What good have

* *Quotidie apud me causam dico, &c.* v. Senec. de Irâ l. 3. c. 36.

have I done, or elſe declined this day? or if ſhe return thee, that thy actions have been good for the matter; Return upon her yet again: Yea, but in what manner did I it? upon what motives? with what mind? in what method? &c. So, what evil have I committed, or cheriſhed, or elſe given check to or crucified this day? or if this and that were not evil in it ſelf; have not I wounded it by ſome evil circumſtances? Believe it, Chriſtians, it would be of excellent advantage to your actual growth and eternal good, if you had ſuch a compendium of ſins and duties by you, or rather in you, as Conſcience might call it over every evening, and comparing your employments that day with it, might be able to witneſs clearly your eſtate and actions of the day now paſt you.

4. Shew kindneſs to thy Conſcience, when ſhe doth reflect; yea, though it be in thy own reproof: Tell her thou art thankful, as well as ſenſible, and doſt more congratulate thy ſelf in the wounds of ſuch a friend, than in the kiſſes of ſuch as flatter. For by this, thou doſt encourage her now, and invite her for hereafter, and ſhalt henceforth enjoy more of thy ſelf and of her ſociety. *He that heareth reproof getteth underſtanding*, (Heb.) *poſſeſſeth an heart*, Prov. 15. 32. Be not of thoſe, that can reflect on a mote in their brother's eye; but not on a beam if in their own eye. The more cenſorious abroad, the more blind or (at beſt) blear-eyed will Conſcience be at home. The kind treatments of a ſelf-reflect- *Direct.* 4.

ing Conscience will produce most circumspection in her, and most compassion towards others, *Mat.* 7. 3, 4. *Gal.* 6. 1, 3. Welcome her reflections; there is not so much vinegar as oyl in them. If she chideth, reproveth, 'tis but (like *Jeremy*) to keep thee from ruin. Therefore, do not smite her, and put her in prison, as *Pashur* did by that Prophet. She may so forbear reflecting, and for a while fall to remorselesness. But assure thy self, if she forbears thee now, 'tis to fetch a greater blow at thee hereafter, *Jer.* 20. 2. *Rom.* 1. 28.

Direct. 5. 5. Stir up thy Conscience if she be remiss; speak to her if she be silent towards thee. (1.) There are some speaking providences, that invite her to reflect, and do suggest matter; suffer her not to break from these: Who knoweth but they may be as prosperous to you, as they were to *Joseph*'s Brethren and *Pharaoh*'s Butler? *Gen.* 42. 21. *cum* 7. &c. 41. 9. *cum* 8. (2.) There are some speaking portions of Scriptures and Sermons that enlighten her for reflecting, and are a special means: Do not baffle with these. For how knoweth thou but there may be the same spiritual and saving effect obtained on thee, as hath been on others? *Heb.* 4. 12. 1 *Cor.* 14. 24, 25. (3.) There be many speaking perswasives to enduce and engage thee to reflect, and serve for motives; do not baulk these.

I have set many before you already, and shall only subjoyn these. 1. God seeth whether thou dallyest in it; and his revenge will be

be ſevere, if thou doſt not reflect in ſeaſon, *Pſal.* 50. 21,22. *Jer.* 8.6, &c. *Hoſ.* 7.2. 2. 'Tis a grievous ſin to decline it; thou doſt not act like a man; thou art brutiſh in thy knowledg yea below the brutes; 'tis not only vanity, but a ſore travel, *Iſa.* 1. 3. *Eccleſ.* 4. 8. 3. What good ſucceſs mayſt thou arrive to by diligence? *Davids* reflection ended in his reformation; *Pauls* in eminent rejoycing; the *Jews* in the reception of their prapers, remiſſion and pardon of their ſins, and reſtoring of them into ſignal favour, both with God and man, *Pſal.* 119. 59. 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. 1 *King.* 8. 47----51.

Q. 11. *How manifold is Conſcience?*

The definition of Conſcience being diſpatcht, the diſtribution regularly follows to be next enquired into. Herein, I may not be too nice or acurate; but attending the deſign of a practical Caſuiſt, I ſhall accordingly guide my ſelf in the diſtribution hereof. Thus more generally (as both common experience, and clear Scripture evidence inſtruct us). There is (1) the good Conſcience, *Heb.* 13.18. 1 *Pet.* 3.16,21. (2) The evil Conſcience, *Heb.* 10. 22. The good and evil conſcience may be conſidered and diſtributed, either (1) according to the ſtated habitude: Or (2) according to the ſeveral acts of mens Conſciences.

Firſt, if we conſider the ſtate, or according to the ſtated habitude of mens Conſciences; ſo the Conſcience may be called good or evil, either (1) in an ethical and moral; Or (2) in

an Evangelical and Spiritual ſenſe.

1. Ethically good, or good upon a common account; ſo is the Conſcience, which from a principle of moral righteouſneſs, is habitually diſpoſed toward, and actually diſchargeth its offices according to Ethical or Moral principles. In this ſenſe many Pagans had, and *Paul* before his Converſion was not without a good Conſcience, *Act.* 23. 1. *I have lived in all good Conſcience before God until this day: i.e.* I have lived up to the light of my Conſcience: Or as the *Dutch* Annotators *, *I have ſerved God uprightly: i.e.* without hypocriſie, according to the knowledg I had.

* *Ad locum*

2. Evangelically good, or good upon the Chriſtian account; ſo only is that Conſcience which from a ſpiritual principle of renovation, is habitually diſpoſed toward, and actually diſchargeth its offices, according to Evangelical principles. *Paul* therefore incloſeth this, between charity out of a pure heart and faith unfeigned, 1 *Tim.* 1. 5. Let me add, that the ſame Conſcience (as that of *Paul* before his effectual calling, and as is commonly found in Moral perſons which we may and do call good; *ſenſu ethico*, in an ethick ſenſe, we muſt call an evil Conſcience; *ſenſu Evangelico* in an Evangelical ſenſe. For ſo ſtill it is, an evil Conſcience, till it be purged from dead works by the blood of Chriſt, to ſerve the living God, *Heb.* 9. 14, 10, 22.

There is a double goodneſs found with the Conſcience, evangelically good; a goodneſs of purity, and a goodneſs of peace; or

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a goodneſs of ſincerity, and of ſecurity, (as a practical Writer of ours ſpeaketh *); Or a goodneſs of integrity, and of tranquillity; (as another *). Hence there is (1) the purified or pure Conſcience, inſtanced 2 *Tim.* 1. 3. And (2) the pacified or peaceable Conſcience, intimated, *Phil.* 4. 7. Oppoſite to this double goodneſs of Conſcience, there is a double evil of defilement to ſin, habitual and allowed; and 2. of diſtreſs, to ſorrow and anguiſh of heart. Accordingly there is (1) the defiled Conſcience propounded, *Tit.* 1. 15. And (2) the diſquiet Conſcience pointed at, *Prov.* 12. 25.

* *Sheffield Good Conſ. c. 2. p. 26.* * *Dykes Good Conſ. p. 20.* See *Ameſ. de Conſc. l. 1. c. 12.*

It muſt be herewith remembred; that neither this twofold evil, nor that twofold goodneſs do always co-exiſt in the ſame Conſcience. There may be purity, yet no peace; and peace of Conſcience (ſuch as it is) yet no purity. There may be an habitually, impure, or defiled Conſcience, which yet is not diſtreſſed; And there may be a diſtreſſed Conſcience which is not habitually impure or defiled; as will be ſeen in the further progreſs of this diſcourſe. Oh happy conjunction! when both goodneſſes, of peace, and of purity, of ſincerity and of ſecurity, do meet in the ſame Conſcience *. Happy, when both evils, of defilement and of diſtreſs, of tranſgreſſion and of trouble, are caſt out, and kept out of the doors of Conſcience together.

* *Felix conſcientia in qua oſculatæ ſunt pax & juſtitia.* Bern. de inter. dom.

Secondly, the good and evil Conſcience may be diſtributed according to the ſeveral acts of Conſcience: *viz.* Either 1. as it apprehends

and dictates matters of law or right, whereby it cometh to an iſſue in judgment. Or 2. as it applys and draws them down to the matter before it for judgment. Both which it doth either firmly and ſtrongly, or but feebly and weakly. Agreeable whereunto, there is (1) the weak and infirm Conſcience. And (2) the well-inabled, firm or ſtrong Conſcience. Of which ſee 1 *Cor.* 8. 7, 10, 12. *Rom.* 15. 1.

As Conſcience (1) apprehends and dictates laws duly and aright, or defectively and amiſs. So far (as to this) Conſcience is either due, right and good. Here is the true Conſcience. Or 2. defective wrong and evil. Here is the falſe Conſcience; between which as participating ſometimes of this, ſometimes of that extream, ſtands the *3d.* probable Conſcience.

1. If Conſcience dictates laws duly and aright, theſe laws it dictateth, are either imprinted, and drawn forth upon the mind within, and ſo are known by the light of natural reaſon. Or 2. imparted, by divine manifeſtation from without, and ſo are known only by a ſtar of greater magnitude, the light of ſupra-natural revelation. With accord to this there is (1) the natural Conſcience; and (2) the enlightned Conſcience. And we find the Apoſtle ſometimes appealing that, and ſometimes this, 1 *Cor.* 6. 2, 3, 9, 15, 16, 19. *Know ye not? &c. i.e.* Do not your Conſciences tell ye as much?

2. If Conſcience dictates laws defectively and amiſs, then it is either 1. through the darkneſs and ignorance thereof; or 2. through the

the deluſion and error, or through the doubtfulneſs and heſitancy thereof. Agreeably, there is (1) the ignorant or blind Conſcience, as ſome phraſe it, though improperly enough; (2) and the erroneous Conſcience; (3) and the heſitating or doubtful Conſcience, *Eph.* 4. 18. *Jam.* 1. 13. *cum* 16. *Mat.* 14. 30, 31.

But in that theſe doubts may be, and often are of various and different degrees, therefore the doubtful Conſcience may be, and is variouſly diſtinguiſhed: There is (1) the opining; (2) the ſcrupulous; and (3) the doubtful Conſcience, ſtrictly ſo called; which are (in brief) thus differenced. The doubtful Conſcience entertains not either part of the matter in queſtion before it; ſo as either to affirm, or deny it, but heſitates and hangs as it were between both. The ſcrupulous and opining Conſcience do both cloſe with one or other part; either affirming on the one hand, or denying on the other. The opining doth this but feebly, the ſcrupulous doth it vexatiouſly. The ſcrupulous Conſcience is by this eminently differenced from the opining, that its cloſe with one part or other is ſtill conjoyn'd with ſome anxious ſuſpicion of, and ſollicitation to the other part.

As Conſcience (2) applys and draws down matters of law to the matter of fact before it for judgment, either 1 aright, or 2 amiſs, well or ill; ſo the Conſcience (as to this) is either 1 aright and good; or 2 amiſs and bad. This application is not perfected, but in and by ſeveral acts; ſome whereof reſpect our

good, others our evil actions. According to theſe different acts, (of which Q. 7.) Conſcience is by ſome diſtributed; and ſo there is the accuſing, the excuſing Conſcience, &c. But this I purpoſly omit. And in that Conſcience is denominated either good or evil (as to this reſpect) according to its diſcharge of theſe acts and offices; I ſhall therefore diſtribute it rather with relation had 1 to the manner; 2. and to the meaſure of its diſcharge of theſe acts.

1. If we conſider the manner; Conſcience proceeds in theſe acts and offices; either 1 entirely and uprightly; or 2 hypocritically: Either 1 faithfully, or 2 unfaithfully: Either 1 inoffenſively, or 2. offenſively. And thus there is (1) the entire Heart or Conſcience, *Pſal.* 78. 72. And (2) the hypocritical, *Jer.* 42. 20. (1) The faithful Conſcience, 2 *Chron.* 19. 9. (2) And the unfaithful, *Pſal.* 5. 9. (1) The inoffenſive Conſcience, *Act.* 24. 16. (2) And the offenſive, 1 *Cor.* 8. 7, 10. Hereof the firſt in each pair is an evil Conſcience; the ſecond in each pair, is a good Conſcience.

2. As concerns the meaſure of this application; theſe acts are either, 1 by and according to the juſt ſtandard, and ſo far the Conſcience, whoſe acts theſe are, is good. Or 2. below the juſt ſtandard, and meaſure in the defect. Or 3. above and beyond it in the exceſs; And ſo far the Conſcience, that thus applys, is bad.

With reſpect to the former extream in the defect there is a double vice of Conſcience.

There

There is 1 the ſluggiſhneſs and oſcitancy thereof, which reſpects principally the imployment of Conſcience. 2. The ſenſeleſneſs and obduracy thereof, which reſpects (principally) the impreſſions on Conſcience; Oppoſite to the former, is the ſedulity of Conſcience, in its tranſactions and operations; Oppoſite to the latter, is the ſoftneſs and tenderneſs of Conſcience, with reſpect to its object. So that here are 1 the ſluggiſh Conſcience, *Luk.* 24.25. And 2 the ſenſeleſs Conſcience, *Eph.* 4. 18, 19. on the one hand, which are evil: And the 1 ſtirring Conſcience, *Exod.* 35. 21. And 2 the ſoft or tender Conſcience, 2 *Chron.* 34. 27. on the other hand, which are good.

I ſhall only add, that as with reſpect to the former vices, which are of different degrees, the evil Conſcience may be diſtinguiſhed into that which 1 is ſleepy, *Rom.* 11. 8. 2. and that which is ſtupified, *Iſa.* 6. 10. 3. and that which is ſeared, 1 *Tim.* 4.2. So, with reſpect to the latter virtues, the good Conſcience may be alſo differently diſtinguiſhed, according to thoſe different degrees. And ſo there is 1 the awakened Conſcience, *Cant.* 5. 2. 2 the attentive Conſcience, *Deut.* 32. 46. 3 The attrite or eminently tender Conſcience, *Pſal.* 51. 17.

With reſpect to the latter extream in the exceſs, there is a twofold evil of Conſcience: 1. There is the dread and terrors of Conſcience, flying and declining Gods preſence, *Gen.* 3. 10. 2 There is the deſpair and horrors of Conſcience, accompanied with a fearful

ful looking for of puniſhment and judgment, *Mat.* 27. 3, 4, 5. *Heb.* 10. 27. So that there is 1 the diſtracting and troubled Conſcience, *Prov.* 15. 13. 2 The deſpairing and tormenting Conſcience, *Gen.* 4. 13, 14. Oppoſite hereunto, there is a twofold good of Conſcience. There is 1 the acquieſcence and reſt of Conſcience, *Mat.* 11. 29. 2 The aſſurance and rejoycing of Conſcience, 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. Agreeably whereunto there is 1 the appeaſed and quiet Conſcience, *Pſal.* 116. 7. 2 The aſſured and comforted Conſcience, *Heb.* 10. 22. *Prov.* 15. 15.

Theſe things will require and receive a fuller enquiry into, and explication of them in the enſuing tract. This Corollary ſhall conclude the preſent queſtion. Since the good and the evil Conſcience are ſo manifold; the greater is your work, and ſhould be your watchfulneſs for the obtaining and ordering of a good Conſcience, and for the preventing and purging out of an evil Conſcience.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Of the good and evil Conſcience according to their ſtated habitude.

Q. 1. *Whether we are to look upon our Conſciences as ſuch that are by nature evil?*

THat we may prevent miſtakes, ſome diſtinctions muſt be premiſed of this term *by nature*; It may be and ſometimes is underſtood for, 1. That which is by and according to the conſtitution of Mans nature; as when we ſay, Man doth by nature conſiſt of a true body, and a reaſonable ſoul. Thus whatſoever is a principle or part of Mans nature is ſaid to be natural to him. 2. For that which is by and according to a conſecution or emanation from Mans nature. As when we ſay, Man is by nature endowed with an Underſtanding, Will, &c. Thus the powers and properties of Mans nature are ſaid to be natural to him. 3. Or for that which is by and according to a connexion with Mans nature; as *Paul* ſaith, *We were by nature children of wrath*, Eph. 2. 3. This condition was connexed with our nature; we were ſubject to the revenging juſtice of God, as ſoon as we received the nature of man. Thus the pravity

pravity and pollution of Mans nature, is ſaid to be natural to him.

The import of this queſtion is not, Whether the Conſcience be evil either in regard of its natural conſtitution or eſſence: In this ſenſe, it muſt needs be good; becauſe it is by the ſpecial efficience and gift of God, *Job* 32. 8. *Chap.* 20. 7. Or 2. in regard of any natural conſecution or emanation from its nature. Thus it cannot be bad, but good, for the ſame reaſon; becauſe it cometh from the bleſſed God, whoſe work is perfect, *Deut*, 32. 4. But 3. in regard of a natural connexion: *i.e.* Whether Conſcience in man, by and according to the condition which is connexed with his nature, be morally evil or ſinful, yea or no?

That every mans Conſcience is by nature ſinful (in the ſenſe laſt mentioned) appears.

Firſt, From the notorious defilement of every man by nature. Theſe propoſitions are of Apoſtolical proof, *That all have ſinned; and that they are all under ſin: That all the world is become guilty before God: And that they are all by nature children of wrath*, Rom. 3. 9, 19, 23. Epheſ. 2. 3. *What is man that he ſhould be clean? and that which is born of a woman that he ſhould be righteous?* ſaith Eliphaz, *All perſons, and all the parts of man are impure and defiled*, Job 15. 14, 15, 16. Rom. 3. 9-----19. *And who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? To them that are defiled is nothing pure: but even their mind and conſcience is defiled*, *Job* 14. 4. *Tit.* 1. 15. The leaven of ſin hath over-ſpread the whole lump. The leproſie of ſin

ſin hath left no faculty untainted. The whole head is ſick, and the whole heart faint. It reacheth from the crown of the head to the ſole of the foot: So that the Conſcience is corrupt as well as the corporeal part, 1 *Cor.*5. 6. *Iſa.* 1. 4, 5, 6.

Secondly, From the notable declarations in the Covenant of Grace. What on Gods part is therein more clearly propoſed than this? *I will put a new ſpirit within you; I will take away the ſtony heart out of your fleſh, and I will give you an heart of fleſh. I will circumciſe your hearts; I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, &c.* Ezek. 11. 19,20. *Chap.*36. 26. *Jer.*31.33. *Deut.*30.6. And what can on mans part then be more clearly ſuppoſed than this? That the heart of man is of a ſtony, adamantine and uncircumciſed temper; without the ſculpture of any ſaving truth, e're grace takes him within the Covenant. And ſurely by nature, the ſons of men are all ſtrangers from the Covenants of Promiſe, *Zach.* 7. 12. *Jer.* 9. 26, 27. 2 *Cor.* 3. 3. *Eph.* 2. 12. *cum* 3.

Thirdly, From the known deſign of the Commandments and conveyance of Grace: A good Conſcience is the end of Gods Commandments, 1 *Tim.* 1. 5. 1 *Pet.* 3. 16. If Conſcience were good by nature, how ſhould the goodneſs thereof be the end and effect of the Goſpel of Grace? A good Conſcience was not found by the Goſpel, in the regions where it came, but was the fruit of the Goſpel. The Goſpel was ſent amongſt them, not as ſuppo-

ſing their Conſcience already good; but to ſet them right. and leave them good whom it found bad, *Act.* 26. 18, 20. 1 *Cor.* 14. 24, 25. *Heb.* 4. 12. A good Conſcience is the effect of the grace of faith in Chriſt; God purifying mens hearts by faith, *Act.* 15. 9. *Heb.* 10. 22. Before the coming of faith then, the Conſcience is defiled; *To the unbeliever nothing is pure.* And manifeſt enough it is, that faith in Chriſt never grew in the garden of nature, when moſt pure from the weeds of ſin, which the Fall hath brought in; but is an eflux of divine grace, and an eſpecial gift of God, *Tit.* 1. 15. *Heb.* 11. 6. *Eph.* 2. 8. *Phil.* 1. 29.

Fourthly, From the neceſſary diffuſion of ſanctifying grace throughout the whole nature of Man; *The God of peace ſanctifie you wholly:* the whole then was ſinful. *And I pray God your whole ſpirit, and ſoul and body, be preſerved blameleſs, &c.* The upper region of Mans ſoul then, and which is rational; as well as the lower region, and which is more ſenſitive were ſtained and culpable. The Conſcience therefore cannot but be corrupted, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 23. The Conſcience could neither require nor receive the renovation of grace, if it were righteous by nature: But renovation paſſeth through all the parts and powers; *Behold all things are become new.* This is to put on the new man, and to put off the old man. Sin did, and Sanctification now doth extend it ſelf over all the man, eſpecially the mind. To be renewed is eminently in the ſpirit of our mind, 2 *Cor.* 5. 17. *Eph.* 4. 22, 23, 24.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, From the noted derivation of a good Conſcience to us, by means of Chriſt: Till his blood be ſprinkled on us, the Conſcience is not ſanctified in us, as is implied *Heb.*9.14. 'Tis the blood of Chriſt *Who through the eternal Spirit offered himſelf without ſpot to God, which purgeth your Conſciences from dead works to ſerve the living God*, Hebr. 9. 14. Conſcience is impure then, till Chriſt purgeth it: 'Tis he freeth it from ſin, and fitteth it for Gods ſervice. But by nature we are all without Chriſt; alienated and enemies in our minds by wicked works. Men do uot come by nature, but are called by grace unto the fellowſhip of the Son Jeſus Chriſt, *Eph.*2. 12. *cum* 3. *Col.* 1. 21. 1 *Cor.* 1. 9.

Sixthly, From the notable defilement of Conſcience in the diſcharge of its acts and offices. Now *læſæ actiones læſas facultates indicant.* It muſt needs be a maimed and diſeaſed power, that puts forth ſuch maimed and diſeaſed performances. Theſe I ſhall briefly inſtance in the next Queſtion, and judg needful, to pluck down the pride of Man, and to preſerve you from the dangerous precipices of many, who cry up Conſcience, and its conduct for Salvation, inſtead of calling men to Chriſt, and to the conduct of the Scriptures.

Q. 2. *What are the evils of Mans Conſcience naturally, which we ſhould be heedful of, and and humbled under?*

Though I cannot fully open that ſink of ſin, which lieth here, (a work that is more accurately done by an acute and able hand *), and though a further manifeſtation hereof muſt follow in our ventilation of the ſeveral ſorts of an evil Conſcience, of which hereafter; yet ſomething ſhall be done, for the diſcovery of this evil and putrefaction.

* *Anth. Burgeſs Orig. ſin, par. 3. c. 2. §. 1---8.*

Conſcience may be conſidered, either as it is to conſerve and ark up laws and rules of practice, or as it is to come and apply theſe laws and rules. 'Tis miſerably corrupt in both. How far it falls ſhort as to the former, will be of particular diſcuſſion hereafter, when I come to ſpeak of the natural Conſcience; Oh how it is darkned, depraved, diſabled! as concerns the matter of an holy life in this world, and the means of an happy life in the world to come. How are men alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, becauſe of the blindneſs of their heart! *Rom.* 1. 21. *Eph.* 4. 18. 1 *Pet.* 1. 14.

The main concernment of Conſcience is to apply rules of practice. And here how deplorably corrupt it is. (1) Sometimes it doth not apply at all. How many practical notions are ſwimming in the head, that never ſink into the heart, and the heart is never ſet to conſider of or concoct them into practice! How much

much ſcience and confidence find we in theſe, *Rom.* 2. 19.----23. but no Conſcience; large and ſound apprehenſions; but little or no ſelf-application. 1. The evil of Conſcience is as to this ſo eminent, that a general command is not thought enough by God; but it muſt be particular and expreſſive, *Thou ſhalt have no other Gods, &c. Thou ſhalt not covet, &c.* Exod. 20. 3.----18. The parable, as pertinent as it was to *Davids* caſe, never pinched *Davids* Conſcience; the Prophet himſelf was fain to do the office of *Davids* Conſcience for him: *And Nathan ſaid to David, Thou art the man, &c.* 2 *Sam.* 12. 1.----14. 2. When it doth apply oft-times, it is not articulately and timely: Chriſt hath told *Peter*, *Before the Cock crow twice, thou ſhalt deny me thrice:* But the Cock crows the firſt and ſecond time, e're Conſcience in *Peter* maketh application of this advice, *Mar.* 14. 30, 68, 72. Conſcience ſhould have applied in *Joſephs* Brethren, before their contract and his captivity in *Egypt*; but till themſelves are captives, their Conſcience was much-what ſilent, *Gen.* 37. 20, *&c. cum.* 42. 21, 22, 3. Or elſe it doth not apply ſo authoritatively and throughly as it ſhould. Conſcience in man hath the command and empire; but how often is concupiſcence too hard for Conſcience? and carnal appetitions ſubjugate Conſcience its application; ſo that bad men keep down the truth in unrighteouſneſs, and care not to retain God in their knowledg: And good men are ſometimes captivated, *as to the law of their minds, by and unto the law*

of ſin, which warreth in their members, Rom. 1. 18, 21, 28. Rom. 7. 23, 25. 4. Or not ſo abidingly; Conſcience applys, and *Felix* trembles; but the fit is ſoon over; Conſcience the Preacher in the boſom muſt not be attended, nor Chriſts Preacher at the Bar heard out, till a better convenience, *Act.* 24. 25. Conſcience is at work with *Pharaoh*, and while he is heated in the furnace of ſucceſſive judgments, Conſcience is hearkning and applying; but after he is out of the fire, (like iron) his heart groweth the harder, and leſs apt to receive an impreſſion, *Exod.* 8. 15, 32, &c. But more particularly.

Conſcience maketh application, either *per modum teſtis*; or *per modum judicis*; as a witneſs, or as a judg; and in both it is very bad.

1. As a witneſs, ſee how wicked it is. 1. In regiſtring how few of mens faults doth it file up and book down! So that *David* brings it to a queſtion, *Who can underſtand his errors*, Pſal. 19. 12. But if there be a vertuous action, or but an appearance, this is forthwith put upon the file and record: witneſs the common practice, beſides the curſe of the Phariſees, *Luk.* 11. 42. *Mat.* 23. 23. 2. In reflecting: How few reflections are made upon our actions! how few returns are made upon our hearts! inſomuch as God ſaith, *I hearkned and heard, and no man repented him of his wickedneſs, ſaying, what have I done?* Jer. 8. 6. No man put Conſcience to the queſtion, touching his converſation. 3. In ruminating or conſidering: How defective and diſeaſed is Con-

Conſcience here likewiſe, as the conſequents do evidently demonſtrate! inſomuch as God is fain to call once and again for it. *Now conſider this ye that forget God: Now conſider your ways, &c.* And doth often complain of the general want of it. *None conſidereth in his heart:* They conſider not in their hearts, that I remember all their wickedneſs; now their own doings have beſet them about; *They ſay not in their heart* (in the confluence of mercies) *let us now fear the Lord our God that giveth the rain, the former and latter rain in his ſeaſon, &c.* Pſal. 50. 22. Hag. 1. 5. Iſa. 44. 19. Hoſ. 7. 2. Jer. 5. 24. 4. In reporting: Oh how corrupt and partial Conſcience is in this! Not a word doth *Samuel* hear from *Saul* (till neceſſitated thereunto) in aggravating his ſin; but how many in apologizing for it. Not a ſyllable is to be ſeen in the Phariſees plea and prayer for ſelf-judging, or for ſelf-abaſing; but the ſubſtance of it is for ſelf-juſtifying and ſelf-advancing, 1 *Sam.* 13. 11, 12. *Chap.* 15. 13, 15, 20, &c.

2. Conſcience makes application as a judg; and herein it miſcarrieth likewiſe: How ſevere is it ordinarily abroad! but how ſlight at home, further than it is ſanctified! Are there not many who judg even the mote in their brothers eye, that yet can indulge a beam mean-while in their own eyes, *Mat.* 7. 2, 3, 4. And damn the ſame things in others, which they do themſelves! *Rom.* 2. 1. *&c.* The faithful themſelves have not been free under a prevailing temptation. Hath *Tamar* plaid the

ſtrumpet? *Bring her forth*, ſaith *Judah*, *and let her be burnt.* But never a blow is given by Conſcience, as concerned his ſin and folly with her, till the Bracelets and ſtaff, and Signet are produced, *Gen.* 38. 13---27. *Davids* anger was greatly kindled, *and as the Lord liveth* (ſaith he) *the man ſhall ſurely die*, that had ſtollen the poor mans lamb, in *Nathans* Parable. But mean-while his Conſcience had no ſenſe of, nor gave ſentence for his own provocation, which run parallel therewith; till the Prophet preſſeth it and putteth it home upon him, 2 *Sam.* 12. 5, 6, 7, &c.

The judgment Conſcience is to make is, either with relation to former things and times, or elſe to future.

1. With relation to former things and times, Conſcience is to accuſe or excuſe. But in each it is (ordinarily) very evil; 1. Sometimes 'tis out in the the matter; It excuſeth and covereth, where it ſhould accuſe and condemn. They all with one conſent began to make excuſe, *Luk.* 14. 18. where their Conſcience ſhould have been accuſing; and they have been manifeſting their repentance for their ſin, and making ready for the ſupper. It accuſeth and condemneth ſometimes where it ſhould rather excuſe, yea commend: *Ye ſaid alſo, behold what a wearineſs is it; and ye have ſnuffed at it, ſaith the Lord of hoſts, &c.* Conſcience counts and judgeth Gods ſervice, and a godly ſtrictneſs, profitleſs, painful, irkſome, evil, &c. *Mal.* 1. 13. *Job* 21. 15. *Chap.* 35. 3. *Amos* 8. 5. *Exod.* 5. 2. 2. Sometimes 'tis outs in the meaſure;

meaſure; generally it is in one extream or other, either over or under. Conſcience accuſed *Cain*, as alſo *Judas*; but to that extremity, as ended in deſpair and horrour. It accuſed *Ahab* and *Felix*; but not as might infer the hatred of their ſins, or alteration of their ſtates, *Gen.* 4. 13, *&c. Mat.* 27. 3, 4, 5. 1 *King.* 21. 29. *cum Chap.* 22. *Act.* 24. 25, 26, 27. 3. Moſt times 'tis out in the method and circumſtance of time: Conſcience ſhould be checking and curbing in the firſt motion of ſin within; but concupiſcence ordinarily conceiveth and bringeth forth, e're Conſcience checketh it, or cenſureth the ſinner. Conſcience ſhould have anticipated that act of pride and carnal confidence in *Davids* numbring the people, at leaſt ſhould have been accuſing while that act was a conſummating: But nine months and twenty days are run out, e're Conſcience gives him a rebuke, *And Davids heart ſmote him, after that he had numbred the people.* Conſcience condemned the ſin of *Judas*, but not till he ſaw the condemning of Jeſus, 2 *Sam.* 24. 8, 10. *Mat.* 27. 3. 4. At all times 'tis out in the manner, if God ſhould be ſevere and weigh it in the ſcales of his Juſtice: Who can ſay I have made my heart clean; I am pure from my ſin? That his Conſcience hath diſcharged its office, with that freedom and faithfulneſs, with that openeſs and holineſs, with that ſincerity and ſelf-denial, &c. as is due from us? *Who can underſtand his errors?* Prov. 20. 9. *Eccleſ.* 7. 20. *Pſal.* 19. 12.

2. With relation to future things and tims,

Conſcience is authoritatively to direct and determine; 1. Subordinately under God and as from God, as the chief Governour; 2. Supreamly to and for God as the chief good and end. But alas! how ſinful is it here likewiſe!

1. How little doth it attend! inſomuch as God complains, *None ſaith, reſtore*; and calls out, *Who will hearken and hear for the time to come? Iſa.* 42.23. How few are there that (with *Mary*) ponder thoſe things in their hearts, which concern the after-times and their eternal peace. But how many that hold faſt deceit, that refuſe to return, and ſet their heart on their iniquity, rather than to ſeek out their duty: *And becauſe ſentence againſt an evil work is not executed ſpeedily, therefore the heart of the ſons of men is fully ſet in them to do evil*, Luk. 2. 19. Jer. 8. 5. Chap. 5. 3. Hoſ. 4. 8. Eccleſ. 8. 11.

2. How loſt is its authority! Conſcience hath much-what left its ſubordination to God and his word: *Lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord, and what wiſdom is in them*, Jer. 8. 9. *Chap.* 6. 10. The Commandments of Men are received, and the Commandments of God are rejected by the *Phariſees*; and Conſcience is pretended and pleaded, *Mat.* 15. 1.---10. *Mar.* 7. 1.---14. Conſcience hath much what loſt alſo its ſuperiority over the Will and Affections, which it ſhould over-rule and order. God calls, and Conſcience calls, *Return ye every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good.* And they ſaid, *There is no hope; but we*

will walk after our own devices, and we will do every one the imagination of his evil heart. And ſo Conſcience is often enſlaved, though it cannot be wholly extinguiſhed by corrupt affections, *Jer.* 18. 11, 12. *Chap.* 2. 24, 25. *Rom.* 1. 18, 21, *&c.*

3. How low is its aſpect! Conſcience ſhould order every buſineſs to be done; as for and as before God; and ſhould hold back from ſin, as that which diſpleaſeth, diſhonoureth, and is contrary to God. But alas! how far diſtant are mens counſels! which abundantly ſpeak the defilement of Conſcience. *Ahab* humbleth himſelf; but 'tis to anticipate the ſufferings denounced from God, not in abhorrence of the ſin done againſt God. *Jehu* reforms, but 'tis to enſure the Government, not to exalt Godlineſs. Conſcience calls the *Phariſees* to prayer and almes-deeds; but 'tis to be ſeen of men, rather than ſerve God: (Calls the People and the Prieſts to faſting at ſome times, to feaſting at others) But keeps them within themſelves, carrieth them not up to God, as their end, in either, 1 *King.* 21. 21, *ad finem.* 2 *King.* 10. 28. *cum* 31. *Mat.* 6. 2, *&c. Zach.* 7. 5, 6.

4. How languid are its acts! Conſcience is 1. to inform and dictate what we are to do, what to decline; but this it doth many times falſly, moſt times ineffectually, calling evil good, and good evil; putting darkneſs for light, and light for darkneſs: Or if it preſenteth our duty right, yet not ſo as to prevail to the doing thereof regularly, *Iſa.* 5. 20.

Rom. 1. 21. 2. Conſcience is to engage and bind us from iniquity to duty. But this it doth, either very feebly, or forbears and lets fall its bonds; in an affliction happily theſe bonds ſeem faſt and firm; but the heart is not right with God, nor remains ſtedfaſt with him, and they ſoon fall of again. And as for the word ſpoken to them in the name of the Lord (when the rod is over, they are ready to ſay), *We will not hearken to thee, but we will certainly do whatſoever ſeems good in our own eyes, &c.* Hoſ. 5. 15. chap. 4. 6. Pſ. 78. 34, 37. Jer. 44. 16, 17. 3. Conſcience is to impell and inſtigate: but alas! how faintly doth it this, or elſe forbears it! inſomuch as the Prophet complains, *There is none that ſtireth up himſelf to take hold of thee*, Iſa. 64. 7. And the beſt of Believers have found frequent cauſe of awakening and alaruming their Conſcience, *Pſal.* 57. 8. *chap.* 103. 1, 2. 4. Yea, Conſcience is ready to engage againſt all this; ſo corrupt it is as to be angry with the ſtrict and ſearching Truths of God; and with *Ahab* to quarel with Gods *Elijahs*, *Haſt thou found me, O mine enemy?* And to conclude with him againſt the meſſengers of God, as he touching *Micajah*, *He never propheſieth good concerning me, but evil:* Yea, to hate the good, and love the evil; to hate him that rebuketh in the gate; to hate the light, and will not come to the light leſt his deeds ſhould be reproved, 1 *King.* 21. 20. *ch.* 22. 8. *Mich.* 3. 2. *Amos* 5. 10. *Joh.* 3. 19, 20.

How extream then is the evil of Conſcience fur-

further than it is purged by the blood of Chriſt! What cauſe have we then of continual humiliation and of higheſt circumſpection! How careful ſhould we be to get Conſcience cleanſed and cured! which leads us to the next Queſtion.

Q. 3. *How may we be cured of an evil Conſcience?*

The cure of the ſeveral evils or ſickneſſes of Conſcience, as alſo the cure of the ſeveral ſorts of an evil Conſcience muſt be expected by you, and will be endeavoured by me, more particularly hereafter. The cure of the evil ſtate of the Conſcience is the concernment I have now before me; I ſuppoſe you ſenſible, that the ſtate thereof is bad. In order to the ſetting right of it; I adviſe that,

I. You ſubmit to your Convictions. Theſe Convictions come from the ſpirit, do not quaſh them, as thou wouldſt not quench the ſpirit, or wouldſt conſult thy Salvation, *Joh.* 16. 8. *Gen.* 6. 3. *Hoſ.* 4. 4, 5. See (1) Thou do not ſtifle or ſuppreſs them: *They held the truth down in unrighteouſneſs, and liked not to retain God in their knowledg*; Rom. 1. What became of it? *Therefore God gave them over to a reprobate mind*. And now farewell Convictions, farewell Conſcience, till they feel the effect of ſuch a conſtupration (happily) in eternal condemnation; they are filled with all manner of unrighteouſneſs, and are fatting for eternal ruin, I.

ruin, *ver.* 18, 21, 24, 28, 29, *&c.* This is the hazard thou runneſt, eſpecially upon iterated acts of rebellion, *Prov.* 1. 24,----33. *Pſal.* 81. 11,12. *Mat.*13.14,15. *Prov.*29.1. And though juſtice may not take this advantage againſt thee, yet every ſtifled Conviction will now add to the hardning of thy Conſcience, and to the augmenting of thy ſhame, ſorrow and ſelf-confuſion, when God ſhall awaken Conſcience, *Zeph.* 7. 11, 12. *Rom.* 2. 4, 5. *Jer.* 31. 19. (2) Thou do not ſit down or ſit ſtill under them. Is Conſcience convinced,how canſt thou be quiet? Are theſe chains to ſleep in? What! condemned of thy ſelf, and yet ſit quiet? What if God ſhould condemn thee too! Methinks we ſhould hear thee crying out with the Jaylor and thoſe Jews, *Men and Brethren, what ſhall we do? Sirs, what muſt I do to be ſaved?* And like the two blind men, the more others are complaining, the more ſhould you be crying, *Tit.* 3. 11. 1 *Joh.* 3. 20. *Act.* 2.37. *c.* 16. 29, 30. *Mat.* 20. 30, 31. I ſay therefore to you, as the Lepers ſaid among themſelves, *Why ſit you here until you die?* Ariſe and be doing if Conſcience kill you, you can but die, 2 *King.* 7. 3, 4. (3) See thou do not ſhift them off: They were convicted by their own Conſcience, (*Joh.* 8.) but it came to no good, they ſtealing away from Chriſt, and ſhifting away from Conſcience, every one to his courſe of life. *Cain* baffles Conſcience with building Cities, and a crowd of ſecular buſineſſes, *Saul* is melancholy (happily Convictions might be upon him from the Lord, though this was

not

not all), and he muſt have the Minſtrel, the muſick, *Joh.* 8. 9. *Gen.* 4. 15, 17. 1 *Sam.* 16. 23. See thou be not diverted from thy Convictions by any company, eſpecially which is ſinful; or by any ſecular contrivance; and that thou do not diſmiſs them, as *Felix* did his, till another convenience, whoſe Conſcience as far as appears did ever after contract more guilt and filthineſs, *Act.* 24. 25, 26, 27. To day therefore while it is called to day, hear Gods voice, and do not harden your hearts, leſt to your voluntary hardning and averſation from Conviction, God add a judicial hardning, and afford you no more Convictions, *Hebr.* 3. 7. ----16. 4, 7.

II. Speak to Conſcience, and ſuffer that to ſpeak to unto you; commune often with it, and ask it, What have I done? and (as the Lord asked *Cain*) *What haſt thou done?* As ever you would have Conſcience throughly ſalved, you muſt throughly ſearch; let your probe go to the bottom of its ulcerated nature; let thy ſpirit make diligent ſearch, *Pſal.* 4. 4. *Jer.* 8. 6. *Gen.* 4. 10. *Pſal.* 77. 6. Having ſearched it, ſpeak to it; tell it of its ſick, ſad, perilous and pitiful eſtate; tell it of its rottenneſs and Gods revenging juſtice. Shew it its extenſive diſeaſes, and the eternal death that will enſue without its effectual change. Speak to it of the ſearcher of hearts, and that he ſeeth all its ſins and ſhifts. God often imputeth the ſinfulneſs of mens hearts to this, that they ſay not in their hearts, they ſet not to their heart, and particularly that they ſay II.

not

heart not to their; *(Heb.) that I remember all their wickedneſs*, Jer. 5.24. *Iſa.* 44. 19. *Hoſ.* 7. 2, *Marg.* Yea, and ſuffer Conſcience to ſpeak to you, while it tells you of your ſins, or of its ſinfulneſs. The knowledg of your caſe is a fair ſtep towards your cure. Do not ſilence or ſuſpend Conſcience, or ſhut its mouth, or thy ears, againſt its clamors. Conſcience calls to you, as *Jotham* to the men of *Shechem*, Hearken unto me that God may hearken unto you; and if you will not hear, and if you will not lay it to heart, be ſure the end will be full of hazard: Wrath is like to come upon you to the uttermoſt, who charge Conſcience as the *Jews* ſometimes did the Miniſters of Chriſt, *That they teach no more in this Name:* Or are ready to chide Conſcience as *Amaziah* ſometime quipped the Prophets confidence, *Art thou made of the Kings counſel? forbear, why ſhouldſt thou be ſmitten?* Judg. 9. *Mal.* 2. 2. 1 *Theſ.* 2. 16. *Act.* 4. 18. 2 *Chr.* 25. 16, 17.

III. III. Stir up and ſtrengthen conſideration: The badneſs of Conſcience grows out of your backwardneſs to conſider; *Iſrael doth not know, my people doth not conſider:* What cometh of it? *Ah ſinful Nation! a people laden with iniquity, &c.* Iſa. 1. 34. They conſidered not in their heart; thence were they ſo corrupt both in their hearts and actions, *Hoſ.* 7. 1, 2, *&c.* When God would have men rectifie their Conſcience, he would therefore have them to recall and conſider with themſelves, *Pſal.* 50. 21, 22. *Iſa.* 44. 19. *c.* 41. 20. Hearken then, Oh careleſs ſinner, and conſider; (1) If Conſcience be

be bad, your Converſations are bad; if not in the account of man, yet in the account of God, who ſeeth not as man ſeeth, *Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart*, 1 Sam. 16. 7. Can the ſalt-ſpring yield freſh ſtreams, or will the ſharp thorn bring forth ſweet grapes? *Every tree* (ſaith our Saviour) *is known by his own fruit: For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble-buſh gather they grapes.* He applies it to the caſe in hand, *An evil man out of the evil treaſure of his heart, bringeth forth evil things.* Let Conſcience be evil, and thy Converſation, thy Communication is not like to be good. For theſe things which proceed out of the mouth, come forth from the heart, and they defile the man. And this know, though thy converſation be bad, thy Conſcience is worſe. Here is the treaſures, 'tis out of the abundance of the heart, *Jam.* 3. 11, 12. *Luk.* 6. 44, 45. *Mat.* 15. 18, 19. (2) Is Conſcience evil? your callings are evil; though not in themſelves, yet to your ſelves. If this be depraved, there is nothing pure to you; your tables become a ſnare, and your trading becomes a ſin. Is Conſcience corrupt? the Farm, the Oxen, the Wife will keep you from Chriſt, which ſhould carry you to him, and your plowing, yea your praying is ſin, *Tit.* 1. 15. *Pſal.* 69. 22. *Luk.* 14. 18, 19, 20. *Prov.* 21. 4. *Pſal.* 109. 8. (3) Is Conſcience evil, your comforts are evil? Inward comforts are but enſnaring cheats, and the illuſions and cõuſenages of the evil one. For all true and gracious comforts ariſe from the teſtimony of a good

good Conſcience; otherwiſe, while you bleſs, God doth curſe, *Job* 8. 19. 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. *Deut.* 29. 19, 20. Your outward comforts are overgrown with curſes; your rich eſtates will be the ruin of your ſouls; your eminent pleaſures will end in perdition; and the greater is your confluence, the greater will be your confuſion, if guilt ſhall ſtill abide upon your Conſcience, *If ye will not lay it to heart, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, I will even ſend a curſe upon you, and I will curſe your bleſſings; yea, I have curſed them already, becauſe ye do not lay it to heart*, Deut. 28. 15,----*ad finem*, Eccleſ. 7. 13. *Jam.* 5. 3,-----6. *Rev.* 18. 7. *Mal.* 2. 2. (4) Is Conſcience evil, you have no intereſt in Chriſt? An intereſt in Chriſt, and an evil Conſcience are things inconſiſtent; who doth always purge their Conſcience, whom he proprietateth in his choice benefits: True it is, the priviledges by Chriſt are large; but as *Peter* told *Simon Magus*, ſo muſt I tell thee upon the ſame reaſon, *Thou haſt neither part nor lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right in the ſight of God*, Heb. 9. 14. c. 10. 22. *Act.* 8. 21. (5) Is Conſcience evil, your choiceſt endeavours are alſo evil; becauſe you fruſtrate the end of the Commandment, which is to free you from an evil Conſcience; and are not framed to that entireneſs, which the Commandment enjoyneth and expecteth, unleſs your hearts are ſprinkled from an evil Conſcience, you have no acceſs to God, nor can hope for acceptance; much leſs can you have aſſurance; your prayers are turned into ſins and provocations.

cations. So long as Conſcience was ſtatedly ſinful, God accounted the moſt coſtly Sacrifices of the *Jews*, (wherewith went ſupplications alſo), but as ſo many ſplendid mockeries, and they were ſo far from receiving acceptation, that they were reckoned abomination, 1 *Tim.* 1. 5. *Jam.* 4.8. *Heb.* 10. 22. *Pſal.*109. 8. *Iſa.* 66. 3, 4. *Prov.* 21. 27. (6) Is Conſcience evil, be ſure the conſequence will be evil, if you continue this evil: So long as Conſcience is bad, no one capacity or faculty can be good, which are all under the empire and influence of Conſcience. *If thine eye be evil, the whole body is full of darkneſs; and if the light that is in thee be darkneſs, how great is that darkneſs!* Mat. 6. 23. But this is not all, mind the place of Conſcience, miſerable muſt be the iſſue of an evil and polluted Conſcience, *Corruptio optimi peſſima*; You that are fearleſs of its ſin now, ſhall feel its ſting hereafter, and ſhriek and roar with the corrodings of that worm which you would not here attempt to kill or cure. Its evil of ſin will iſſue in extreameſt and eternal ſufferings if not timely ſalved. Cure it, or it will kill and condemn you, and you will contract condemnation from God unto you, *Mar.* 9. 44. *Iſa.* 66. 24. 1 *Joh.* 3. 20.

IV. Speed your Converſion from ſin; your Conſcience muſt needs be ſinful, ſo long as your ſin continueth. If you continue in a ſinful ſtate, the ſtate of Conſcience muſt needs be ſinful. If you are defiled, this is defiled: If you are after the fleſh, ſo is this alſo;

Tit.

Tit. 1. 15. *Rom.* 8. 5, 6, 7, 8. If you would heal Conſcience, then haſten your converſion; do not only try your ways, but turn to the Lord, who will bind up that which is broken, *Lam.* 3. 40. *Hoſ.* 6. 1. The change of your condition includeth the change of Conſcience: Turn you at Gods reproof, and he will pour out his ſpirit upon you; and then you are no more in the fleſh, but in the ſpirit; the motions and mindings of Conſcience ſhall be no more ſo fleſhly, *Prov.* 1. 27. *Rom.* 8. 9 *c.* 7. 5, 6.

V. V. Strike in with Chriſt: The ſtain of Conſcience is ſuch, that none but the ſprinklings of Chriſts blood upon it, can purge it from dead works to ſerve the living God, *Heb.* 10. 22. *c.* 9. 14. The evil of Conſcience came in originally by the firſt *Adam*, and is only healed by the ſecond *Adam*. Haſten to him by an active faith. This is that bunch of Hyſop which ſprinkleth this blood upon you, and ſo the Conſcience becomes clean in the ſight of God, *Pſal.* 51. 7. Would you have Conſcience cured from its evil ſtate? cloſe with Chriſt, by a ſound faith: *He dwelleth in the heart by faith*, Eph. 3. 17.

VI. VI. Search and put the Covenant into ſuit; follow him that did create, and can alone cure the Conſcience with iterated prayers, and with the inſtance and preſſing of his promiſes. Peruſe his Promiſes, *I will take away the ſtony heart out of their fleſh, &c.* Ezek. 11. 19, 20. *c.* 36. 26, 27. *Deut.* 30. 6. Plead them in your petitions. He will yet for this be enquired

of

of by the house of Israel, *Ezek.* 36. 37. Unfold the pravity of your Hearts and Consciences; Lord, I acknowledg my Conscience is miserably corrupted; far departed from thy first Creation, and foully depraved both by the fall of *Adam*, and my own voluntary defections. Behold, I bring thee an old and obdurate Heart, Lord renew and mollifie it; a diseased and defiled Heart, Lord, repair and purge it; an Heart of stone and adamant, inflexible to thy ductare, impenetrable by thy displeasure, &c. Lord, remove it, and renew me. Urge him with his Promises to do it, and thine own heart there-with also, to deliberate and draw from them. Lord, hast thou not said, *A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.* O make good thy word to thy poor creature, who can no more cure this heart of stone, than I can create another world. *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me:* So *David*, *Psal.* 51. 10. See further helps hereafter.

Q. 4. *How may we know whether our Consciences are Evangelically good or bad?*

Be plain with Conscience, and let it be plain with thee: But in regard our Conscience may and doth put a paralogism upon us, and its argumentation is oft-times sophistical and fallacious, through the depravedness §. 1.

of our natures (of which hereafter) and ſo men deceive their own ſelves, *Jam.* 1. 22. παραλογιζόμενοι. It therefore requireth the ſtricter care and caution in your part, and circumſpection on mine, how we manage this work: To which end before I propound marks, * I would premiſe this brief animadverſion, for preventing miſtakes *; that you may not conclude the goodneſs of your Conſcience, either from their paſt or preſent 1 ſcrupuloſity, 2 ſmart or trouble on the one hand, 3 ſtillneſs or quiet on the other, without further and fuller evidence. Which I ſhall put upon a more deliberate enquiry hereafter.

* See *Dik. Good Conſcience ch.* 7, 8, 9. *p.* 73. *ad* 128. *Sheffield Good Conſcience, ch.* 24. *Baldwins caſ. Conſcience, ch.* 12. *ad* 285.

* See *Sheffields Good Conſcience, ch.* 18. 244.

The ſtated habitude of your Conſcience may be diſcerned by theſe five things, The adjuncts, the acts, the abſoluteneſs, the aſpect, the anſwer of the Conſcience.

§. 2. *Firſt*, By the Adjuncts of Conſcience, are your Conſciences Evangelically pure, or defiled? Evangelically at peace, or diſquieted? enlightned, or ſtill in darkneſs? are they ſincere and upright, or but hollow and hypocritical? ſoft and tender, or but hardened and obdurate? Theſe things will be put upon a diſtinct trial hereafter.

§. 3. *Secondly*, By the acts of your Conſcience; acts ſpeak the powers and habits whence they are; good acts ſpeak them good; evil acts ſpeak them evil; you ſhall know them by their fruits; a good tree cannot bring forth evil

evil fruit; neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit, *Mat.* 7. 16, 17, 18. Thus the acts of Conſcience naturally good beſpeak a good natural Conſcience; the acts of Conſcience which are morally good beſpeak a good moral Conſcience; and the acts of Conſcience which are Evangelically good beſpeak a good Evangelical Conſcience. Of this is the enquiry.

Q. *May we conclude our Conſciences are good, becauſe their acts are good?*

I anſwer, 1. Though you may not conclude it from a few occaſional acts; for even a bad Conſcience may call and keep you to that which is good for a fit as long as the force of ſuch an occaſion or inducement laſts; witneſs *Saul*, *Simon Magus*, and thoſe *Pſal.* 78. 34.---38. 1 *Sam.* 24. 16, *&c.* 26. 21, *&c.* *Act.* 3. 13. Yet, when ſuch acts become fixed and ordinary; when, though there may be ſome diverſions, as were in *Job* and *Paul*, yet the main ſtream and current of its acts are carried in an Evangelical channel, from ſin to righteouſneſs, you may now conclude the goodneſs of your Conſcience, *Job* 27. 3, 4. *cum* 5. *Rom.* 7. 25. *cum præced.* 2. Though the good acts of Conſcience *materially* conſidered, will not argue the goodneſs of Conſcience; for there have been acts for their matter very good, where the heart and mind have been very bad, *Joh.* 8. 9. *Rom.* 2. 15. *Pſal.* 78. 34, 35, 36. yet its good acts formally conſidered, as we take in with the matter of theſe acts, the manner alſo wherein, and motives whereupon §. 4.

they are put forth, do argue a good Conſcience; for ſuch grapes cannot grow upon thiſtles; nor can a ſalt fountain yield ſuch ſweet water. We may argue from the effect to the cauſe, from holy and good operations to a good and holy *Origine*, as *Paul* doth in this caſe, *Heb.* 13. 18. *Act.* 24. 16.

What are the acts of your Conſcience then? what ordinarily doth it? thence you may conclude its habitude, and how 'tis ordinarily diſpoſed. There are the elicit and imperate acts of Conſcience; how are theſe diſcharged? is it from Evangelical motives, and in an Evangelical manner?

Conſcience is 1. to dictate truth; and doth it dictate Goſpel-truths and duties? Repentance towards God, and Faith towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt? To deny your ſelves, and take up your croſs? To love your enemies, and bleſs them that hate you? To endure grief, ſuffering wrongfully, and overcome evil with good, *&c.* *Act.* 20. 21. *Mar.* 8. 34. *Mat.* 5. 44. 1 *Pet.* 2. 19. *Rom.* 12. 21. Are the Conſciences not only enlightned in, but engaged by theſe commands? But more particularly, doth the Conſcience dictate theſe Goſpel-truths to be done upon Goſpel-terms? To be done (1) to and for Chriſt, as your head and ruler? And can your Conſcience ſay in ſincerity, *The Lord is our Judg, the Lord is our King, the Lord is our Lawgiver?* And that you eſteem all but loſs, for the excellency of the knowledg of Jeſus Chriſt your Lord? [*Iſa.* 33. 22. *Phil.* 3. 8.] 2. To be done in and through Chriſt as your Interceſſour

ceſſour and Redeemer? To do all in the name of our Lord Jeſus, with the rejecting of your own righteouſneſs, and reſting upon the grace of God in him alone for your reward and acceptance? [*Col.* 3. 17. *Phil.* 3. 9. *Dan.* 9. 18. 1 *Pet.* 2. 5.] And doth not thy Conſcience only dictate this in the Theory, but deſcends to the Praxis? And doth it not only inform this in the notion, but doth it infer and induce it in the ordinary courſe of thy Converſation? Thou haſt then a good Conſcience.

2. Conſcience is to deliver its teſtimony. How doth your Conſcience teſtifie? Doth it teſtifie to and for the Goſpel? to the authority thereof, above all laws over you? to the amiableneſs thereof above all doctrines to you? to the ſin-ſubduing and ſoul-ſaving efficacy thereof upon you? and to the ſingular and ſurpaſſing excellency thereof unto you? [*Act.* 4. 19, 20. *Rom.* 1. 16. 1 *Theſ.* 1. 5, 6. *Pſal.* 119. 72.] Doth Conſcience teſtifie with and according to the Goſpel? Are you wont to pray for the eſpecial teachings of the ſpirit, in prevention of a falſe teſtimony? To put your ſelves as in his ſight and preſence, that it may produce a good and true teſtimony? And do you prize and prefer the Spirits teſtimony before that of your ſpirits, and are prevailingly ſteered by his witneſs with your Conſcience; and can provoke and call in with *Peter* his all-ſeeing knowledg? *Lord, thou knoweſt all things, and thou knoweſt that I love thee*, Job 34. 32. *Pſal.* 139. 23, 24. 2 *Cor.* 2. 17. *Rom.* 8. 16. *Joh.* 21. 17. This is a good Conſcience. I forbear to inſtance further.

§. 5. *Thirdly*, By the abſoluteneſs and univerſality of the good Conſcience; that Conſcience is not good at all that is not good in all. *Paul* truſts he had a good Conſcience; but whence appeared it? *In all things he was willing to live honeſtly*, Heb. 13. 18.

Q. *May we argue the goodneſs of our Conſcience, by and from their Univerſality and Abſoluteneſs?*

§. 6. I anſwer you may and ſhould as *Paul* doth; but muſt attentively conſider that the Univerſality by which you prove it, is not to be an Univerſality in the degrees of goodneſs, which is reſerved for glory; but an Univerſality as to the parts of goodneſs, which is inſeparable from grace, 1 *King.* 9. 4. *Luk.* 1. 6. 1 *Chron.* 29. 19. So then the Conſcience that is unfeignedly good is univerſally good as it reſpects all the parts; though it cannot here reach all the perfection and degrees of goodneſs.

§. 7. I. 'Tis good as to all concernments; good at firſt Table, and good at ſecond-Table-duties, *Willing in all things to live honeſtly*, Heb. 13. 18. 'Tis not good at matters of holineſs, and bad at matters of honeſty; or good at matters of honeſty, and bad at matters of holineſs; but good, both as to holineſs and as to honeſty, whereof the good Conſcience ever makes a good conjunction, 1 *Tim.* 2. 2. *Luk.* 8. 15. Let the formal hypocrite be for inoffenſiveneſs to God, while he indulgeth himſelf in his offenſiveneſs to man; let the civil Juſticiary be for inoffenſiveneſs to man, while he indulgeth his inobedience and offenſiveneſs to God.

God. But the great exerciſe and endeavour of the good Conſcience is to preſerve it ſelf, void of offence both towards God, (the object of all thoſe religious dues required in the firſt table) and towards men, (the object of all that righteouſneſs required in the ſecond Table), *Act.* 24. 16. It provides for honeſt things, not only in the ſight of the Lord, but in the ſight of men, 2 *Cor.* 8. 21. Your Conſciences are evil who are careleſs of either Table. She that was for dividing the Child was not indeed the Mother, 1 *King.* 3.26, 27. Though you are devout towards God, if you are diſhoneſt towards men, or diſſolute in your ſelves, you have an evil Conſcience. And though you are upright in your tranſactions and dealings with men, if you are regardleſs of the truths and duties of godlineſs or ſobriety, you have ſtill but an evil Conſcience: See theſe inſtances, *Mat.* 23. 14. *ch.* 15. 4, 5. *Iſa.* 58. 2.---9. *Prov.* 7. 13.----16. *Luk.* 18.11, 12. *Mat.* 19. 20, 21, 22. The good Conſcience is not disjunctive, but copulative in its duties, and will give Chriſt his due, and *Cæſar* his. You then that impartially conſult both Tables in your practice; that knit religion towards God with righteouſneſs towards Men; that follow after both things holy, and things honeſt; things juſt, and things pure; and are taught to live both ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world; your converſations are in godly ſincerity, and you have a good Conſcience. May you rejoyce in its teſtimony, *Pſal.*15.2. *Iſa.*33.15. *Phil.*4.8. *Tit.* 2.12. 2 *Cor.*1.12.

§. 8. II. 'Tis good as to all the Commandments: The good Conſcience is ſet to do all Gods Commandments; God chargeth all his Commandments upon the Conſcience. *Keep and ſeek for all the Commandments of the Lord your God*, 1 *Chron.*28.8. *Deut.* 11.8,22. *ch.* 26. 18. And the good Conſcience chargeth them all upon the godly, to keep all the commands he knoweth, and to ſeek all the commands he knoweth not, that he may keep them: *We are all here preſent before God*, ſaith *Cornelius*, *to hear all things that are commanded of God*, Act.10. 33. The good Conſcience counts all Gods Commandments to be good; All thy Commandments are ſure, all thy Commandments are faithful. It ſaith not only, that they are all truth, but all thy Commandments are righteouſneſs, *Pſal.*111.7. *c.* 119.86, 151, 172. The good Conſcience would know all Gods Commandments, becauſe good, and that he may keep them. *Oh, that my ways were directed* (ſaith he) *to keep thy ſtatutes! O let me not wander from thy Commandments! O hide not thy Commandments from me! Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy ſtatutes, and I ſhall keep it unto the end. Give me underſtanding, and I ſhall keep thy Law; yea, I ſhall obſerve it with my whole heart*, Pſal. 119. 5, 10, 19, 33, 34. 'Tis true, corrupt fleſh may and will ever and anon be retracting and impleading it; but the good Conſcience fights it out, and is finally victorious. He hath ſworn, and he will perform it, that he will keep Gods righteous judgments: And I will walk at liberty (ſaith the

this Soul, for I ſeek thy precepts, *ver.* 106, 45. The good Conſcience would keep all Gods Commandments which he knoweth. He may be weak in many things, but he is willing in all things to live honeſtly. He allows himſelf in no known averſation from any one of Gods Teſtimonies. His heart is inclined to perform Gods ſtatutes always: If the habitual temper be enquired into, whatever his declinings be under the heat of tentation, with his mind he ſerves the law of God, *Heb.* 13. 18. *Rom.* 7. 15, 25. *Pſal.* 119. 112. How is it with your Conſciences then? Adhere they cloſely to the commands and traditions of men, but mean while are careleſs of the Commands and Truths of God? Or, are they herein obſervedly ſtrict, in Mint, Anniſe and Cummin, the leſſer matters of the Law, while mean time they omit Mercy, Judgment and Faith, the greater matters of the Law? Are they partial, and upon reſerves in the matters of Piety, and of his Precepts? And do they ordinarily allow the forbearance of, or formality in any ſelf-diſpleaſing, ſecret or inobſerved duties? You have then an evil Conſcience. *Mar.* 7. 6.----10. *Mat.* 23. 23. *Mal.* 2. 9. 1 *Joh.* 2. 4. But do they eſteem all Gods Precepts concerning all things to be right? Do you walk in all the Commandments and Ordinances of God, with *Zachary* and *Elizabeth*? Have you a reſpect to all Gods Commandments? Then ſhall you not be aſhamed, it is well with Conſcience, and ſhall be well you in the concluſion, *Pſal.* 119. 6, 128. *Luk.* 1. 6.

1. 6. *Jer.* 7. 23. The integrity of *Davids* heart hath the divine impreſſion and allowance, or approbation, while it was ſet to do according to all that God had commanded him, 1 *King.* 9. 4. 2 *Chron.* 7. 17.

§. 9. (3) 'Tis good as concerns all Corruptions, which it doth both avoid and abhor. He would abſtain from, and doth hate every falſe way, *Pſal.* 119. 2, 3, 128. It refrains the feet from every evil way, that we may keep to the Word of God without us, and keep up the work of God within us, *Pſal.* 119. 101, 104. This Soul may actually, and doth often ſin, but he allows not what he doth, and may ſay with *Paul*, *What I hate, that do I*, Rom. 7. 15. A good Conſcience then will not allow of any evil of corruption, not any manner, or any meaſure, any kind, or to any degree. It would have iniquity, all iniquity, and all of iniquity taken away; the pollution and power, as well as puniſhment, and will rather chooſe the greateſt ſuffering than the leaſt ſin, *Hoſ.* 14. 2. *Pſal.* 139. 24. *Heb.* 11. 25. *How can I do this great wickedneſs and ſin againſt God?* This is the reaſoning of the good Conſcience. *I will take heed to my ways, that I ſin not, I am purpoſed, that my mouth ſhall not tranſgreſs.* Theſe are the reſolutions of the good Conſcience, *Gen.* 39. 9. *Pſal.* 39. 1. *c.* 17. 3. How is it with Conſcience? Happily it hath not with *Joab* turned after *Abſalom*; but hath it turned after *Adonijah?* Vile and refuſe ſins it will deſtroy utterly: But the fatlings, and the beſt of the ſheep, that will beſt ſerve your carnal pleaſures and profits,

profits, eſpecially *Agag*, the predominant and pleaſing ſin, muſt they be ſpared? *Baals* Temple and Prieſts muſt fall; but muſt *Jeroboams* Calves ſtand? Sins againſt the intereſt of worldly ſelf be crucified, but muſt ſins that feed thy intereſt be cheriſhed? Ah wicked and wretched Conſcience! 1 *King.* 1. 7. 1 *Sam.* 15. 9. 2 *King.* 10. 29. *Jam.* 4. 4. Your Conſciences happily ſtrain at Gnats, ſuch and ſuch ſmaller ſins; But can they ſwallow Camels, greater ſins? Your Conſciences abhor Idols, but do you commit Sacriledg? You cannot violate a raſh Oath with *Herod*; but can you ſwear raſhly, and ſlay the innocent ſervants of the Lord, rather than it ſhall be ſaid, you have not accompliſhed it? Ah deplorable and deſperate Conſciences! *Mat.* 23. 24. *Rom.* 2. 22. *Mar.* 6. 26, 27. Again, it may be your Conſciences cannot but accuſe for, and do abhor flagitious and open ſins; You are not extortioners, unjuſt, adulterers, *&c.* But can they allow thoſe of a freſher dye, and leſs obvious to ſight, ſuch as are more ſmall, or more ſecret? Then ſurely 'tis an evil Conſcience, *Luk.* 18. 11. *Epheſ.* 5. 12. Sirs, you whoſe Conſciences are both againſt ſmall and great, ſins open and in ſecret, againſt darling ſins as well as diſpleaſing; ſins that would build up, as well as ſuch as will break down your fleſhes intereſt: You, you are the men and women that have this good Conſcience, *Pſal.* 19. 12, 13.

(4) 'Tis good as concerns all our capacities. §. 10.
The good Conſcience goeth the whole compaſs of a Chriſtian, of Chriſtianity and of his calling

calling. For the Chriſtian, the good Conſcience will have him good without, and good within. 'Tis for inward renovation, as well as outward reformation; for waſhing the heart, the affections, as well as whiting the appearances, the actions. It's taken up moſt about the inward and hidden man, calls firſt for truth in the inward parts, the transforming of the Underſtanding into divine Truths, and turning in of the Will unto, and determining it upon the Divine goodneſs. And you ſhall ever find a good Conſcience followed with a good Converſation, *Epheſ.* 4. 23, 24. *Jer.* 4. 14. 1 *Pet.* 3. 4. *Pſal.* 51. 6. *Rom.* 12. 2. *Deut.* 26. 17. 1 *Pet.* 3. 16. For Chriſtianity, the good Conſcience will forgo none, and is found good in all the doctrines and duties, and graces, both of faith and charity. 'Tis not only almoſt but altogether perſwaded to be a Chriſtian: From the heart hath this Soul obeyed the form of Chriſtian doctrine. This Conſcience is as were it caſt into it, and cometh from it as the veſſel from the mould into which it was melted *. 1 *Tim.* 1. 5. *Act.* 26. 28, 29. *Rom.* 6. 17. For our callings; the good Conſcience will be good in our particular Callings and relations, as well as good in our general, and as concerns Religion. Good as a Subject, as well as good as a Saint: *Innocency was found in me before God, and alſo before thee, O King, I have done no hurt*, ſaith *Daniel*, *Chap.* 6. 22. Good as a Miniſter of a flock, not ſeeking his own profit, but the profit of many that they may be ſaved. Good as a Maſter of a Family;

* εἰς ὃν παρεδόθητε τύπον διδαχῆς.

Family; *He and his houſe will ſerve the Lord: He will walk within his houſe, with a perfect heart*, 1 Cor. 10. 33. *Joſh.* 24. 15. *Pſal.* 101. 2. In ſhort, the good Conſcience conſiders the buſineſs, as well as the benefit of the relation and calling; Conſcience directs the buſineſs, that it be done in the Lord, and as he hath limited, diſcuſſes the buſineſs, whether it be done or not, and calls over the carriage of it, and asks the ſon, ſervant, *&c.* as *Samuel* did *Saul*, *What haſt thou done?* And in a word dictates, that all buſineſſes be done for the Lord, and for Conſcience ſake, *Epheſ.* 5. 22. *chap.* 6. 10. 1 *Sam.* 13. 11. *Jer.* 8. 6. *Rom.* 13. 5. 1 *Pet.* 2. 18, 19. How is it with you then? let Conſcience ſpeak, an evil Converſation doth loudly proclaim an evil Conſcience: Or is the outſide clean, but the inſide mean while corrupt? You name the name of Chriſt, but are your natures ſtill unchang'd and carnal? You are good at the doctrine of Chriſtianity, but are you bad at the duties? Good at the Temple, and in Gods houſe, but bad at your Trades, and in your own Houſes? Good at the Bible with *Judas*, but bad at the Bag? Good at your general profeſſion of Religion, but bad in your particular places and relations? You have then but an evil Conſcience, *Mat.* 23. 25. ----28. 2 *Tim.* 2. 19, 21. *Tit.* 1. 16. *Jer.* 7. 4---13. *Joh.* 12. 6. *Luk.* 16. 10, 11. But as for you, whoſe Conſciences run all points of the Compaſs, reſpects all parts of your callings; you into whoſe converſations Conſcience like Chriſts coat, is woven from the top

top throughout: You that are willing in all things to live honeſtly; to wear the comforts of a good Conſcience, as *Paul* did, and *Peter* directs tacitely, *Heb.* 13. 10. 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. 1 *Pet.* 3. 16.

§. 11. (5) 'Tis good in its whole Compaſs: The Conſcience that is truly good is throughly good: This goodneſs is not at the liſt only, but runs throughout the whole piece. 'Tis often called the perfect heart, 2 *Chron.* 25. 2. 1 *King.* 11. 4. *c.* 15. 3. 14. There is no piece or part of the Conſcience but is renewed with Grace, though it be renewed but in part: 'Tis good at the rule in the firſt Propoſition; It hath learnt not only the truth of Jeſus, but the truth as 'tis in Jeſus. Good at the reflection it is to make, and the report it is to manifeſt in the ſecond Propoſition. Good at the reſult from both, in the third Propoſition. 'Tis good as a rule, good as a witneſs, good as a judg; So that the Chriſtian is habitually diſpoſed to do what it enjoyneth, and endure what is impoſed for Conſcience ſake, 1 *Pet.* 2. 19. *Rom.* 13. 5. Is Conſcience then ſanctified throughout? Hath the leaven of ſpecial grace leavened the whole lump? Is your heart not only ſtudied, but ſound in Gods ſtatutes? Then ſhall you not be aſhamed, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 23. *Pſal.* 119. 80.

§. 12. (6) 'Tis good for continuance, and in all conditions: The good Conſcience is good, as concerns all times, as well as all things. *I do exerciſe my ſelf to have always a Conſcience void of offence*, ſaith *Paul*, *Act.* 24. 16. Though the

the good Conſcience be not always in exerciſe, yet the good man doth exerciſe himſelf to have always a good Conſcience. A good Conſcience, ſaith one, holds out conſtantly; in a good cauſe without deflection, and in a good courſe without defection *. Particular failings thereof cannot but be confeſſed; but this is the prevailing frame and ordinary conſtitution of it. Let the times frown or favour, be times of proſperity to, or perſecution of the Church and cauſe of God; yet the good Conſcience whether it rain or ſhine, holds on his way; and he that hath clean hands ſhall be ſtronger and ſtronger, *Job* 17. 9. He may ſometimes go out of his way, but never will give it over. This Soul breaketh for the longing it hath to Gods Teſtimonies at all times, and hath reſpect unto his Statutes continually; his heart may turn aſide, but is not turned back; and though it may ſometimes deal fooliſhly, and moſt times feebly, yet dealeth not falſly in Gods Covenant, *Pſal.* 119. 20, 117. *c.* 44. 17, 18. Let Satan tempt *Job*, the *Sabeans* trouble, *&c.* his Cattel, his Corn, his Sheep, his Servants, his Children, and all are taken from him; but this good Conſcience ſtill tarrieth with him. He could hold faſt none of that great confluence, but ſtill he holdeth faſt this good Conſcience, as God himſelf is witneſs, and Satan doth not withſtand it, *Job* 1. 13.----20. *cum* 2. 3. Still he holdeth faſt his Integrity. Put it upon the enquiry then in your own ſpirits: What! like *Reuben*, unſtable as waters! Doth Conſcience

* *Dykes Good Conſ. c.* 8. *p.* 113

ſcience ſhift as the winds of worldly profit or preferment ſit? Now for the Word, and now for the World with *Demas*? Would you fain have ſaved Chriſt and his concernments (as *Pilat* would from the cruelty of the *Jews*) even now, and do you by and by ſentence him to death, when others would elſe ſay, you were no friends to *Cæſar*? What! good only while *Jehojadah* your Tutor or Miniſter, *&c.* lived, and now grown evil? Good only till *Balak* offers the wages of unrighteouſneſs to you? Good only till the ſtorms of tribulation ariſe, and then farewell Conſcience, and the houſe falls! Oh miſerable and miſtaking Conſciences! *Gen.* 49. 4. 2 *Tim.* 4. 10. *Joh.* 19. 21. 2 *Chron.* 24. 2, 17, 18. *Num.* 22. 16. 1 *Tim.* 1. 19. *Mat.* 7. 26, 27. Yours is the good and honeſt heart and conſcience, who bring forth fruit with patience or perſeverance *, *Luk.* 8. 15. Review your principles: Can you ſay, I have enclined my heart to perform thy Statutes always, even to the end? Reflect on your purpoſes, and are theſe your practical and permanent reſolutions? *I will never forget thy precepts; I will keep thy Law continually, for ever and ever: I will walk in the name of the Lord my God for ever and ever.* And if Religion will make me vile, I will be more vile. Recall your practice. Have you taken his Teſtimonies as an heritage for ever? Many perhaps may have been your Perſecutors, yet have you not declined from his Teſtimonies? And will you yet keep his Precepts with the whole heart, vvhatever be the ex-

* ἐν ὑπομονῇ.

exigencies befall you, or enticements to flatter you? And ſhall this God be your God, and your portion for ever? Go and glorifie God, and congratulate thy ſelf in the happineſs of a good Conſcience, *Pſal.* 119. 112, 93, 44. *Mic.* 4. 5. 2 *Sam.* 6. 22. *Pſal.* 119. 111, 157, 69. & 48. 14. 73. 26.

Fourthly, By the aſpect of a good Conſcience you may acquaint your ſelves whether your Conſciences are good. This is towards God, the creator, commander of, and that alone infallibly knoweth the Conſcience, 1 *Pet.* 2. 19. Or if towards Man, 'tis but ſecondarily and ſubordinately, and towards God primarily. Firſt towards God, then towards Man; towards Man in and for God; towards God above and beyond Man, *Act.* 24. 16. §. 13.

Q. Whether we may argue the goodneſs of our Conſcience from their aſpect towards God? I anſwer you may. But what you are chiefly to attend and ask after, is, whether God be chief and principal in its aſpect? For an evil Conſcience may have an eye upon God, but God is not higheſt or upmoſt, *Joh.* 12. 43. *Tit.* 3. 3. And a good Conſcience may have an eye upon its own happineſs, and the approbation of others, but 'tis upon God firſt and chiefeſt, *Heb.* 11. 16. 2 *Cor.* 4. 2. When God is the ſupream in your intentions, and your higheſt aims and ambitions are to be accepted of him and approved by him, it is an argument a good Conſcience, and affords great confidence, 2 *Cor.* 5. 8, 9, 10, 17, 18. The good Conſcience then is, §. 14.

§. 15. (1) For the Power and Authority of God, as by which it is principally ruled. The good Conſcience will give unto *Cæſar* the things which are *Cæſars*; he ſhall have our ſubjection not only for wrath, but for Conſcience ſake: But it will not give unto *Cæſar* the things which are Gods, or ſet Chriſt beneath *Cæſar*. Conſcience remembers there is one Law-giver, and reſolves it, *the Lord is our Law-giver*, Mat. 22. 21. *Joh.* 4. 12. *Iſa.* 33. 12. The good Conſcience is for acts of obedience to Governours; but 'tis limited therein and led thereunto principally by the authority of God. 'Tis limited thereby; if Governours command what God countermands, the good Conſcience dares not comply to it, ſaith he, *We ought to obey God rather than men. Daniel* purpoſed in his heart that he would not defile himſelf with the portion of the Kings meat, prohibited by the law: Nor will he decline his prayers to God, whatever be the decree and prohibition of the ſupream Governour. Let *Baals* worſhip bear the Princes and publick warrant; *Elijah* and ſeven thouſand more dare not bow the knee to him, or in it, *Act.* 5. 29. *Dan.* 1. 8. *c.* 6. 10. 1 *King.* 19. 18. 'Tis led thereby alſo; the good Conſcience ſubmits to every ordinance of Man, but 'tis for the Lords ſake: It counſels us to keep the King's commandment; but its principally quickned by his obligation from, and in regard of the Oath of God, 1 *Pet.* 2. 13. *Eccleſ.* 8. 2. How is it then? can your Conſciences willingly paſs the commands of God for

for the commands of Men, and keep their ſtatutes that are contrary to his Commandment and your knowledg, rather than you will come to ſuffer? Or, do you obey the commands, and take up the ordinances of God, as *Hamor* and *Shechem*, and the men of their City did that of Circumciſion; But 'tis for compaſſing *Dinah*, and the deſigns they have for *Jacob's* ſubſtance? You own the concernments of Chriſt, and officiouſly aſſiſt to his cauſe and intereſt, as the people ſometimes did the *Jews*, and the rulers of the Provinces brought them their aſſiſtance; but is it becauſe the fear of the *Jews*, or the fear of *Mordecai*, the Chriſtian Magiſtrate is fallen upon you? This is an evil Conſcience, *Hoſ.* 5. 11. *Mic.* 6. 16. *Gen.* 34. 22, 23, 24, *Eſth.* 8. 17. c. 9. 3. You that vail the commands of Men to the commands of God, and in fulfilling his or their Commandments which correſpond with his, have your firſt reſpects not to humane commands, cenſures or cuſtoms, or your carnal ends; but to the divine command and conſtitution, with good will doing ſervice, as to the Lord, and not to men; you have one good evidence of a good Conſcience, *Act.* 4. 19. *Iſa.* 26. 13. *Epheſ.* 6. 7.

(2) 'Tis for the preſence and all-ſeeing eye of God, which it principally reſpects: The good Conſcience eyes principally God's knowledg, *O Lord*, ſaith he, *thou haſt ſearched me and known me.* Not a word in my tongue, not a working of my thoughts but thou knoweſt it altogether: Unto him therefore he openeth *§.* 16.

his cauſe; ſets him before his face, and is not ſo much over-ruled by this, that man ſeeth, as by this ordinarily, that God ſeeth him, and ſearcheth his heart and reins. This perfect heart is not only for doing that which is good in it ſelf, but for doing it, as in God's ſight, *Pſal.* 139. 1——14. *Jer.* 20. 12. *Pſal.* 16. 8. *c.* 7. 3, 2 *King.* 20. 3. *I have kept thy Precepts*, ſaith this pious Conſcience, *for all my ways are before thee*, Pſal. 119. 168. How is it then, are you moſt for God's, or moſt for man's eye? You make broad your Phylacteries, you do works of Piety perhaps, and works of Charity, but are they done for to be ſeen of Men? Is this the mark you ſhoot at principally? Oh groſs hypocriſie and unſound Conſciences! *Mat.* 23. 5. *c.* 6. 5. *Noah* and *Enoch* walked amongſt men, but with God: God was moſt in their eye. The light of Chriſtians ſhines before men, and as their good works may be ſeen of them: But it ſtays not here, they ſubordinate this to an higher ſight and ſcope, *that others ſeeing their good works, may glorifie their Father which is Heaven*, Gen. 5. 22. *c.* 6. 9. Mat. 5. 16. You, that as of God, and as in the ſight of God ſo do and ſo ſpeak; who are more preponderated in the courſe of their practice by his preſence, than Mens privity or perſwaſives; that walk as before him, and are wrought to a greater willingneſs in his ſervice, by his heart-ſearching, than if any others ſaw you; you have great cauſe of gratitude to him, and of joy in your ſelves, as thoſe who have a good Conſcience, 2 *Cor.* 2. 17. *Pſal.* 44. 20, 21. *Gen.* 17. 1. 1 *Chr.* 28. 9.

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(3) *'Tis for the praiſe and approving it ſelf to God, which it principally regardeth:* The good Conſcience is firſt and moſt for commending it ſelf and us to God. Indeed 'tis not he who commendeth himſelf, or whom man commendeth, is approved, but whom God commendeth, 2 *Cor.* 10.18. 'Tis true, he would by manifeſtation of the truth commend himſelf to every mans Conſcience; and that his ſervice might be accepted of the Saints: But 'tis as in God's ſight, and for God's ſake, that he may be the more ſerviceable to his glory in their good; and 'tis firſt to God, then to their Conſciences, 2 *Cor.* 4.2, 5. *Rom.* 15.31, 2 *Cor.* 5.11. The great care therefore of the good Conſcience is, to prove and approve what is acceptable unto the Lord: This is that he ſo aimeth at, and is ſo ambitious of, that he may be accepted of him, and have grace whereby he may ſerve him acceptably, *Epheſ.* 5.10. 2 *Cor.* 5.9. *Heb.* 12.28. Enquire then, do you ſeek the praiſe and approbation of Men more than the praiſe and approbation of God, court their applauſe? &c. Oh wretched Conſciences! ye are they which juſtifie your ſelves before men, but God knoweth your Hearts; and this know, *that which is highly eſteemed amongſt men is abomination in the ſight of God*, Joh. 5.44. *c.* 12.43. *Luk.* 16.15. But you that ſeek the honour that cometh from God only, and ſet the higheſt account upon his comprobation, whoſe praiſe is not of men, but of God; that ſeek his favour with your whole heart, and that the words of your mouth, and meditations

§. 17.

tations of your heart may be acceptable in his sight; Yours, yours, is the good Conscience, *Joh.* 12. 43. *Rom.* 2. 29. *Psal.* 119. 68. *c.* 19. 13, 14.

§. 18. (4) *'Tis for pleasing and applying himself to God, to which it principally refers:* The good Conscience is for Compliance to Gods Will, and would so carry it self in its whole work, as it and we might receive *Enochs* Testimony, *That he pleased God:* And this one argument is of most observed avail with it, That God is pleased, *Heb.* 11. 5. *c.* 13. 16. 'Tis true, it is willing to please his Neighbour for his good; and would fain please all men in all things, that consist with his place and their profit; but 'tis not for his own ends, that he seeks his own profit, but for their edification, and to exalt God and his Gospel, if by any means he may save some, the profit of many that they may be saved, *Rom.* 15. 2. 1 *Cor.* 10. 33. *c.* 9. 19.——24. The greatest care of the good Conscience is not so much to please man as to please God. If he seeks to gratifie them, 'tis because he is set to glorifie him, 'tis with singleness of heart fearing God. This is his greatest care to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing; and as he hath received how he ought to walk and to please God, so he would fain abound more and more. Nothing so pleases him as that God is pleased; nothing so provokes him as that God is provoked, 1 *Cor.* 7. 32. 2 *Tim.* 2. 4. *Col.* 3. 22. *c.* 1. 10. 1 *Thes.* 4. 1. *Psal.* 69. 30, 31. How is it then? do you seek to please men? and

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to do them a pleaſure do not ſtick to omit the duties of your place, and with *Herod*, *Felix* and *Feſtus* to oppreſs alſo the defenders of piety? Or in the duties of your place, is your deſign ordinarily to pleaſe man before God, or rather than him? If you yet ſeek to pleaſe men, how are you then the ſervants of Chriſt? Nor have you this ſingleneſs of heart and Conſcience, whereto we are ſpeaking, *Act.* 12. 3. *c.* 24. 27. 25. 9. *Gal.* 1. 10. *Epheſ.* 6. 5, 6. You whoſe deſires and deſigns are principally levelled at the pleaſing of God, and would be always doing the things which are pleaſing in his ſight; you whoſe duties to men are not diſcharged with eye-ſervice, as men-pleaſers, but in ſingleneſs of heart, as unto Chriſt; you who walk not as pleaſing men, but as pleaſing God, which trieth our hearts; you have an happy argument of having a good Conſcience, *Joh.* 8. 29. 1 *Joh.* 3. 22. *Col.* 3. 22. 1 *Theſ.* 2. 4.

(5) *'Tis for the poſſeſſing and enjoyment of God, which it principally requireth, and in which it principally reſts:* The good Conſcience is for Communion with God, above the greateſt Comforts; whilſt others are for Corn and Wine, Creature-comforts and Immunities; this is for the light of God's Countenance; *As for me* (ſaith he) *I will behold thy face in righteouſneſs.* Here is his Bleſſedneſs; *Bleſſed is the man whom thou chooſeſt, and cauſeſt to approach unto thee.* Here is his Buſineſs; *This is the one thing he deſireth of the Lord, and that he will ſeek after*, Pſal. 4. 6, 7. *c.* 17. 15. *c.* 65. 4. §. 19.

c. 27. 4. 'Tis true, he doth not slight, but diligently seeks a competency also of the Goods of this life; but first he seeks the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, and would fain see the goodness of God in this Worlds Goods, and by them serve his Glory. The first and great Commandment (as in it self, so) to this Soul, to the good Conscience, *is to love the Lord his God, with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind, Prov.* 30. 8, 9. *Mat.* 6. 33. *Psal.* 104. 33, 34. *compared with the former verses, Mat.* 22. 37, 38. How is it then? What! God not in all your thoughts! Is the friendship and fruition of the World sought before the friendship and fruition of God? Is the World upmost, and God under? You can part with God rather than part with your Grandeur, Goods, *&c.* You can venture the loss of him rather than the loss of them. Happily you pray and profess to Him, but do you most prize them mean while? Do you cry more for Corn and Wine, than for the incomes of his Grace, the influx of his Goodness, the Interest of his Gospel? *&c.* Oh sensual and sinful Consciences! *Psal.* 10. 4. *Jam.* 4. 4. 2 *Tim.* 3. 4. *c.* 4. 10. 1 *Tim.* 6. 9, 10. *Hos.* 7. 14. But do you prefer one God to all other Goodness? Do you pant most after the grace of his Favour to you, and the grace of his Spirit in you? Do your Souls pursue after him, and will not be put off with Secular commodities and enjoyments? Is he the portion that doth best please you? Is your Propriety in and intercourse with him of

highest

higher price then all other priviledges and poſſeſſions to you? What! have you none in Heaven but God? and is there none upon Earth you deſire in compariſon with God? Certainly you have choſen the better part, and may comfortably poſſeſs your ſelves in this ſign of a good Conſcience, *Pſal.*62. 5, 6, 7. *c.* 42. 1, *&c. c.* 63. 1, *&c. c.* 16. 5, 6, 7. *c.* 84. 10. *c.* 73. 25, 26. *Luk.* 10. 42.

(6) *'Tis for praiſe to the advancement and glorifying of God, which it principally reckons of, and finally refers unto:* The good Conſcience is for celebrating God and his Glory; in which it ultimately terminates the diſcharge of its Offices, and the debts and obligations it inferreth on us; this is Gods end in renewing the Conſcience, and the great end of Conſcience renewed, that he might be glorified, *Iſa.* 43. 7, 21. *c.* 60. 21. 1 *Tim.* 1. 17. This it chargeth moſt upon it ſelf: *Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, and all that is within me, bleſs his holy Name: Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, &c. Awake up my Glory, awake Pſaltery and Harp, I my ſelf will awake right early.* This alſo comforteth it ſelf moſt in, and he is not aſhamed, but can cheerfully acquieſce, whatſoever he doth or endureth for Conſcience ſake toward God; while Chriſt is magnified in his body, and while on his part God is glorified, *Pſal.* 103. 1, 2. *c.* 57. 8. *Phil.* 1. 20. 1 *Pet.* 2. 19. 4. 14. This is the great matter which he purpoſeth with himſelf, and to which he provoketh other Souls; *I will praiſe thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart; and I will* §. 20.

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glorifie thy Name for evermore. I will bleſs the Lord at all times, his praiſe ſhall be continually in my mouth. My ſoul ſhall make her boaſt in God. O magnifie the Lord with me, and let us exalt his Name together; Yea, let all ſuch as love thy Salvation ſay continually, the Lord be magnified, Pſal. 86. 12. c. 34. 1, 2, 3. 70. 4. Let Conſcience anſwer then, Do not you like to retain God in your knowledg! you know God; but are you careleſs of glorifying him as God? And ſay, *what is the Almighty that we ſhould ſerve him? and what profit ſhould we have if we pray unto him?* Or do you ſcoff at your Brethren, which you may have caſt out, with thoſe in *Iſaiah*, ſaying, *Let the Lord be glorified?* O miſerable Conſciences! *Rom.* 1. 21, 28. *Job* 21. 14. *Iſa.* 66. 5. *cum ch.* 5. 19. Or, while you pretend to Gods glory do you prefer your own? Are your acts of piety, your almes or acts of charity, done principally that you may have glory of men, unto whom ye would outwardly appear righteous? *Verily you have your reward*, and ſtill remain with rotten and unſound Conſciences, *Mat.* 6. 2. 1 *Theſ.* 2. 6. *Mat.* 23. 27, 28. But you that vail your own glory to Gods; the bias and bent of whoſe good works, which men behold, is to this mark, that they may glorifie (not ſo much you, as) God in and for you in the day of Viſitation; you that can venture and forgo all for Gods glory, when he calls for it; and count of nothing ſo high as his honour; you whoſe fruits of righteouſneſs are with this final reſpect, that your Father

ther may be glorified, *and you may ſhew forth the praiſes of him, who hath called you out of darkneſs into his marvellous light:* You that have glorified him, and are reſolved you will glorifie him again; *Go eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart, for God now accepteth thy work. He that ſpeaketh of himſelf ſeeketh his own glory; but he that ſeeketh his glory that ſent him, the ſame is true, and no unrighteouſneſs is in him,* Joh. 8. 50. 1 Pet. 2. 12. Mat. 5. 16. 2 Cor. 12. 9, 10. Phil. 1. 11. 1 Pet. 2. 9. Eccleſ. 9. 7. Joh. 7. 18.

Fifthly, By the anſwer of a good Conſcience; which (if *Peter* be conſulted) is towards God, 1 *Pet.* 3. 21. §. 21.

Queſt. Whether we may argue the goodneſs of our Conſcience from their anſwer towards God? I anſwer, you may. But then 'tis not ſo much from your preſent earneſtneſs therein, as from the powerful efficacy and proportionate extent thereof, that you muſt take your evidence; for you ſhall find bad Conſciences furniſhed with quick and ready anſwers, as if they would not abridge God of the leaſt he calls for, *Deut.* 5. 27, 28, 29. *Jer.* 42. 5, 6. You are concerned to diſcuſs the deliberateneſs of the anſwer, and its due extent.

The good Conſcience anſwers to Gods Call, Commands, &c. §. 22.

(1) *To Gods Call:* No ſooner is the Conſcience effectually convinced, or hath Chriſt effectually called, but you have the ὑποφώνημα, (as the

the Apoſtle phraſes it) of the good Conſcience: Conſcience *anſwers* with *Samuel*, *Speak Lord, for thy ſervant heareth*, and with *David*, *Lo, I come; I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy Law is within my heart.* 1 Sam. 3. 10. Pſal. 40. 7, 8. Yea, Conſcience asks with *Saul*, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? Teach me thy way, O Lord, I will walk in thy truth: Unite my heart to fear thy name.* Conſcience ſets him upon the Tower with *Habakkuk*, and will watch to ſee what God will ſay unto him, and what he ſhall anſwer, when he is convinced or argued with, *Act. 9. 6. Pſal. 86. 11. Hab. 2. 1.* How is it then? hath God called, but ye would not anſwer? Hath he ſpoken, but ye would not hear? Have you ſet at nought his counſel, and deſpiſed his reproof? Have you choſen your own ways, and doth your Soul delight it ſelf in your abominations? You have then ſinful and ſtupid Conſciences, *Prov. 1. 24, 25. Iſa. 65. 12. c. 66. 3, 4.* But you whoſe Ears are bored to hear, and your Hearts are brought to embrace the Calls of Grace; You that with *Simon* and *Andrew* his Brother, with *James* the Son of *Zebedee*, and *John* his Brother, at the Call of Chriſt can quit all, when he once ſaid *Come ye after me*: You that attend the ſaving motions of his Spirit, and addict your ſelves to this myſtery of Godlineſs, whoſe Hearts are determined upon God in Chriſt, and to whom no Calls are ſo acceptable, as are the Calls from ſin, and to his ſervice; you may comfortably reflect, and repoſe your ſelves in the witneſs of a good

a good Conſcience, *Mar.* 1. 16.----21. 1 *Cor.* 16. 15. *Job* 22. 21, 22. *ch.* 27. 6.

(2) *To Gods Commands:* The good Conſci- §. 32.
ence correſponds to Gods Commandments, not only as it conſerves and apprehends Law; Here is a Copy and Tranſcript within of the Command and Truths without; The Law of God is in his Heart; the Spirit of the living God hath written it in theſe fleſhly Tables, *Pſal.* 37. 31. *Jer.* 31. 33. 2 *Cor.* 3. 3. But as it comes and applies Law; hath God ſaid, *Seek ye my face?* Conſcience ſpeaks back, My Heart ſaid unto thee, *Thy face, Lord, will I ſeek.* Hath God commanded us to keep his Precepts diligently? Conſcience correſponds and crys out, *O that my ways were directed to keep thy ſtatutes!* Doth God require that we do his will? *I delight to do thy will*, ſaith Conſcience, *Pſal.* 27. 8. *c.* 119. 4, 5. *c.* 40. 7, 8. Try then what agreement find you between his Commands and your Conſciences? Are you afraid of the reſtraint of God's Laws, and would break theſe bands from you, and can you not bear theſe cords? Do you hate him that rebuketh in the Gate, and abhor the Miniſtry that ſpeaks uprightly, and ſearcheth the *inward parts of the belly?* as *Ahab* did *Micajah*, for ſaith he, *He never propheſieth good but always evil to me?* Surely this is an evil Conſcience, *Pſal.* 2. 3. *Amos* 5. 10. 2 *Chron.* 18. 7. Or how do your Hearts anſwer, and are accommodated to his Teſtimonies? Have God's Commands a counter-part in your Conſciences? Have you hid his Law in your Hearts, that you may not

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ſin againſt him? And are your Hearts enclined to perform his Statutes always, even to the end? Gods Law commands you: Do your Hearts readily accept and return anſwer to it? *I will run the way of thy Commandments, and have reſpect unto thy ways: I will delight my ſelf in thy Statutes: I will not forget thy Word*, Pſal. 119.11, 15, 16, 32, 112. Gods Law chides and threatens you: How do your Hearts reliſh it, and acquieſce under it? Is it a kindneſs? Do you count it an excellent Oyl? Do you compoſe your ſelves to ſubmiſſion under it, and to ſerve the ends of God by it? *Pſal.* 141.5. *Iſa.* 39.8. 1 *Sam.* 3.18. *Mich.* 7.9. Here is one anſwer of a good Conſcience.

§.24. (3) *To Gods Covenant:* The good Conſcience gives anſwer to Gods Covenant; 1. to the tenour of it. God ſaith unto them which were not his people, *Thou art my people:* The good Conſcience ſpeaks back again, *Thou art my God. O my Soul,* (ſaith *David*) *thou haſt ſaid unto the Lord, thou art my God*, Hoſ. 2.23. *Pſal.* 16.2. *Ezek.* 11.20. *c.* 36.28. 2. To the terms of it: The Lord avoucheth Believers to be his peculiar people, and that they ſhould keep all his Commandments: The good Conſcience reſtipulates, and avoucheth the Lord to be his God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his Statutes and his Commandments, *&c. Deut.* 26.17, 18. *Exod.* 19,5.-----9. 3. To the Truths in it: The good Conſcience hath a Tranſcript of all the important Truths of Gods Covenant, *This ſhall be the Covenant I will make with them*

them after thoſe days, ſaith the Lord, I will put my Law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, Jer. 31. 33. *Heb.* 8. 8, 9, 10. *Come then, who is he that hath engaged his heart to approach unto me, ſaith the Lord?* Have you taken the Lord for your God, and alone chief good, and given back your ſelves unto him his ſervants to obey, and that for ever? Have you none in Heaven but God, and is there none upon Earth that you deſire beſides God? And have you taken his Teſtimonies as an Heritage for ever, and choſen the way of his Truths? This may let you know, that you have a good Conſcience, *Jer.* 30.21, 22. *c.*32. 28. *Pſal.* 73. 25. *c.* 119. 30, 111. *I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord, and they ſhall be my people, and I will be their God; for they ſhall return unto me with their whole heart*, Jer. 24. 7. Is there a Converſion to God, the Conſcience is good? But no Converſion, no good Conſcience. Hath God commanded you, ſaying, *Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye ſhall be my people; and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you?* But you hearken not, nor encline your ears, and walk in your own counſels and imaginations, refuſe Communion with God, or reject any of the known Commands of God; or regard any iniquity, or any intereſt above God; you have then evil Hearts, and your Conſciences are not right in the ſight of God, *Jer.* 7. 23, 24. *c.* 3. 17. *Numb.* 85. 39. *Pſal.* 66. 18.

(4) To

§. 25. (4) *To the cauſe of God:* The good Conſcience is for Gods cauſe above others, above its own; this is the bottom in which it ſails all its concernments, and therefore with *Paul*, and with *Moſes*, is cool and gentle in tranſacting his own matters; but quick and tranſported with great heat in the matters of God and Godlineſs; forgives, and is ſubmiſſive to his own enemies; but flames with zeal, and is ſtiff and inflexible to Gods enemies, *Gal.* 4.12. *cum* 5.12. *Act.* 13.9, *&c. Num.* 12.3. *cum Exod.* 30.19. If the Cauſe of God calls for his part in action, he is ready, and willingly offers himſelf, according to his office, and the capacity and circumſtances he is in: If it calls for a paſſive part, he can for Conſcience toward God endure grief, ſuffering wrongfully, and is ready not only to be bound, but alſo to die for his ſake, 2 *Cor.*9.2. *Judg.*5.2, 9. 2 *Cor.* 8.3. 1 *Pet.* 2.19. *Act.* 21.13. You that like *Gallio* care for none of theſe things, that ſeek your own things, not the things which are Jeſus Chriſts, whoſe Spirits are abundantly raiſed in your own Cauſe, but ordinarily remiſs in Gods Cauſe, have no good Conſcience, *Act.* 18.17. *Phil.* 2.21. *Pſal.* 137.5, 6. But you that prefer *Hieruſalem* to your chief joy; that ſay unto Zion, *becauſe of the houſe of the Lord our God we will ſeek thy good:* that will very gladly ſpend and be ſpent for the good of Souls, and glory of their Saviour; that ſacrifice your own Concernments to thoſe of Chriſt and his Church; and would rejoyce to be offered upon the ſacrifice and ſervice of their faith,

faith, and rejoyce in your ſufferings with reſpect to his ſervice: Receive this ſign, and may you reap the ſenſe of a good Conſcience, *Pſal.* 137.6. & 122.9. 2 *Cor.*12.15. *Phil.* 2.17. *Col.* 1.24.

(5) *To the counſels of God, and his diſpenſations towards them:* The good Conſcience would hold Communion with God in his Works, as well as in his Word, and doth eſpecially conſider of, and commemorates, what God hath done for his Soul, *Pſal.* 107. 43. & 94.19. & 66.16. Hath God accepted his perſon, anſwered his prayers, afforded him his preſence of Grace? &c. it binds him the faſter to God: *Bleſſed be God* (ſaith he) *who hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.* He will love God the more choicely; live with God the more cloſely; lean on and truſt in God the more conſtantly, *Pſ.*66.19,20.116. throughout, 146.1,2. Doth God afflict and is angry with him, with-draws the ſenſe of his Salvation, with-holds the ſpirit of Peace, and the waters are come even into his Soul? He conſiders and confeſſes his ſin, communes with himſelf, converts and turns himſelf to God, crieth for his Salvation, chargeth his Soul to hope in, to obey, to remember and to repoſe it ſelf in God, *Pſal.* 32. 5, &c. & 38. 6, &c. & 42. 5,11. & 51.1---12. & 77.1.---13. & 13. 1---6. I ſhould be too large, if I left particular inſtances, as may concern either the inward or outward man. Put it upon the enquiry. The Providences of God are various toward you: How do you anſwer the acts of God, and his §. 26.

aimes by them? What, no laying them to heart? Happily, he may have brought his judgments at the doors, and yet do not you lay it to heart? not ſo much as ask what have I done? nor hearken to him for all this, to obſerve his Counſels, or obey his Commandments? Happily, he may have multiplied his mercies on you; and do you not yet ſay in your hearts, *Let us now fear the Lord our God?* but the mercies which he gave to humble and to prove you, you abuſe to pride and luxury, *&c.* Oh ſinful and ſenſleſs Conſciences! *Iſa.* 42. 25. *Jer.* 8. 7. *Hoſ.* 7. 2. *Jer.* 5. 24. *Deut.* 8. 16, 17. Or do you anſwer his adminiſtrations of juſtice with trying your ways and turning to the Lord? Do you labour to ſee his mind in them, and to learn more skill in his Statutes through them? And doth Conſcience call upon you, *Come and let us return to the Lord our God*, and by ſound Converſion to ſeek a cure for them? In adminiſtrations of Mercy doth Conſcience ordinarily attend, abett, and argue from thence to duty? And when it hath put the queſtion, *What ſhall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?* Doth it proceed to the Pſalmiſt's concluſive reſolution, *I will take the cup of Salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord: I will pay my vows unto the Lord: I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living, &c.* In ſhort, is Conſcience wont to anſwer the diſpenſations of mercy with more dearneſs for God and his glory, and with more degrees of humility, as it did in *Jacob* and in *David?* then is yours a good Conſcience, *Pſal.* 103. throughout,

out, *Ezra* 9. 13, 14. *Gen.* 32. 10. 2 *Sam.* 7. 18, 19.

(6) *To the Copy of God:* The Conſcience which is ſtatedly good ſetteth the Chriſtian upon Conformity to God; he abhorreth ſaucineſs with God, as blaſphemous, and aſpireth after ſimilitude to God as his eminent buſineſs: He knoweth that God is righteous, and thence concludeth, to be a doer of righteouſneſs. God is pure, and (as his hope is in him, ſo) he purifieth himſelf in Conformity to him. God hath made it an argument, *Be ye holy, for I am holy:* Conſcience bearing his Authority, brings the ſame argument alſo, and Chriſt binds it upon the Conſcience, 1 *Joh.* 2. 29. *c.* 3. 3. 1 *Pet.* 1. 15, 16. *Mat.* 5. 48. Little Children, let no man deceive you, if God hath not drawn out his reſemblance upon you; if you are not doers of Righteouſneſs, as God is righteous; If Conſcience can permit you to walk in darkneſs, while you profeſs to that God who is a pure light: whatever be your pleas, that your Conſciences are good, they are but pretenſions, not proofs, your Conſciences are ſtill bad. You that are ordinarily looking at, and labouring to come as nigh as you may unto your Copy; That are followers of God as dear Children; that are created after God in righteouſneſs and true holineſs; and whoſe care it is to be as immutable, intenſive and extenſive as you can in goodneſs, You are the Children of God our Father, who hath given to you a good Conſcience: 1 *Joh.* 3. 7. 9. *c.* 1. 5, 6, 7. 1 *Pet.* 1. 14. *Eph.* 5. 1. *c.* 4. 24. *Mat.* 5. 45. §. 27.

I have uſed a greater length and liberty of Speech in this Queſtion than I have in former, or ſhall in future Caſes; the importance thereof enforced me. If Conſcience be good, your condition is good; if Conſcience be naught, your condition is naught too, as will be ſeen hereafter. Be therefore the more thorough and ſerious in the trial of your ſelves; ſtill remembring this juſt Limit, in all thy helps for knowledg hereof given you; That *your ordinary or uſual tendency and habitude muſt be attended.* 'Tis not what your Conſcience is for a fit, or in ſome ſudden flaſh, either as to good, or as to evil; but what your common frame and general or moſt uſual temper is, muſt be conſulted.

Q. 5. *Whether we may know that our Conſciences be ſtatedly and Evangelically good?*

Though your Conſciences are lockt up from the knowledg of others, and are comprehenſively and fully known only by God himſelf; for who can *underſtand his errors?* Pſal. 19. 12. Yet, every man may know what the ſtated habitude of his Conſcience is, if he will but deliberately diſcuſs, and carefully commune with, and impartially attend and improve the judgment of his own Conſcience: As ſeems evident, (1) By the deſcription of its Nature, *'Tis the candle of the Lord, ſearching* (not ſome, but) *all* (not only the outward parts of the body, but) *the inward parts of the belly*; *i.e.* the inwards acts and thoughts, and therefore the habitude

the habitude and temper of the Heart; elſewhere expreſſed by the Belly, *Prov.* 20.7. *cum Job* 15. 2, 35. *c.* 32. 18, 19. The Spirit of Man, *i.e.* the Conſcience of Man knoweth the things of Man, and within Man. The Heart, *i.e.* the Conſcience knoweth its own bitterneſs, and therefore may know its own bleſſedneſs, 1 *Cor.* 2. 11. *Prov.* 14. 10. (2) By the demands from and for it in Scripture, *Know ye not your ſelves? i. e.* your Conſciences and ſo what your and their ſtate and condition is, *whether you be in the faith, whether Chriſt be in you?* 2 Cor. 13. 5. Let every man prove his work, and then ſhall he have rejoycing in himſelf, which ſprings from the Teſtimony of a good Conſcience, *Gal.* 6. 4. 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. (3) By the declared ſenſe hereof we find among the Saints: *Job*'s record is on high, and in his own heart, *Job* 16. 19. *c.* 27. 5, 6. *David* and *Hezekiah* can, and do confidently appeal the all-knowing God in it, *Pſal.* 26. 2, 3. & 17. 3. *Iſa.* 38. 3. Hear *Paul*, *We truſt we have a good Conſcience*: 'Tis not we think, or we hope; but we truſt, πεποίθαμεν, *we are perſwaded, are confident of it*, which confidence we may raiſe upon the ſame foundation that he did, *In all things willing to live honeſtly*, Heb. 13. 18.

Q. 6. *How may we get or obtain a good Conſcience?*

The Premiſes in anſwer to the former Queſtion are of place and pertinent uſe here alſo, as likewiſe whatſoever ſhall be preſcribed hereafter, for obtaining a pure, peaceable, upright, faithful Conſcience, *&c.* Here I adviſe you theſe few things: * That you

* *See Perkin's Tom. 1. Treat. of Conſcience, c. 4. p. 551. Sheffield's good Conſcience, ch. 25. Dyke's good Conſc. c. 5, 6.*

Direct. 1. (1) *Act Conſideration* *: Conſideration is the next ſtep to the Converſion of thy ſelf, the change of thy eſtate, and the ſetting of thy Conſcience right in the ſight of God, *Pſal.* 119. 59, 60. & 45. 10, 11. & 50. 21, 22. [See Q. 4. *Direct.* 3.] Conſider therefore in thy Heart; [*Deut.* 4. 39. *c.* 8. 5.] If my Conſcience ſhall be good, Then

* *See Motives in Dyke's good Conſ. c. 10. ad finem.*

(1) My Condition will be good; ſecure Conſcience for the main, and thou ſecureſt thy Condition for the main. Thy Condition is as thy Conſcience is; good or bad as this is good or bad in the ſight of God. *Amaziah*'s Condition was bad, though the current of his Actions was materially good, becauſe his Conſcience was bad; he did that which was right in the ſight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart, nor like his father *David*, 2 *Chron.* 25. 2. 2 *King.* 14. 3. *Jehoſhaphat*'s Condition was good, though he were chargeable with ſome things that were ſignally bad, becauſe his

his Conſcience was good; *Nevertheleſs, there are good things found in thee, in that thou haſt prepared thine heart to ſeek God*, 2 Chron. 19. 2, 3.

(2) *My Converſation will be good:* Conſcience hath the ducture of it, the dominion over it; as it goeth well or ill in Conſcience within, ſo it will be in thy Converſation without: [See Q. 4.] Make the Tree good, and his Fruit is good*: Make the Tree corrupt, and his Fruit is corrupt, *Mat.* 12. 33, 34. *Rehoboam*'s courſe of life was bad, in that his Conſcience was bad, *Becauſe he prepared not his heart to ſeek the Lord. Ezra*'s on the contrary was good, in that his Conſcience was good; *Ezra had prepared his heart to ſeek the Law of the Lord*, 2 Chron. 12. 14. Ezra 7. 10. See 1 Pet. 3. 16.

* *Non erit fructus bonus niſi arboris bonæ; muta Cor & mutabitur opus.* Aug. de verb. Dom. Ser. 12.

(3) *My Capacities will be good:* Theſe are regulated by the Conſcience, and are renewed with the Conſcience. 1, Your receptive Capacities, whereby you receive from God, will be enlarged and enabled to take in more from him, both of his truth and goodneſs. Natural Conſcience cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God; but the Renewed can receive them, and that with all readineſs, and in much riches; Grace for Grace from Chriſt the Word, joy and gladneſs from and with the Word of Chriſt, the Spirit of Adoption, ſweet and full aſſurance, *&c.* 1 *Cor.* 2. 12, 14. *Act.* 17. 11. *Col.* 2. 2. *Joh.* 1. 16. 1 *Theſ.* 1. 6. *Rom.* 8. 15. *Heb.* 10. 22. 2. Your active Capacities whereby you return to God, and

work out your everlaſting good. Have you a good Conſcience? you will be willing in all things to live honeſtly, *Heb.* 13. 18. The evil Conſcience contracts and ſtraitens; the good Conſcience dilates and widens the Capacity of Man: here is true largneſs of Heart, the fetters of Sin now fall off; the Mind will be enlarged to know and conſider; the Will to elect and embrace the Lord and his Laws; the Memory to record and recall; and the very Members to run the way of his Teſtimonies, 1 *King.* 4. 29. *Prov.* 2. 10,11,12. *Pſal.* 119. 32.

(4) Then and not elſe are others Commendations good; *As the fining-pot for ſilver, and the furnace for gold, ſo is a man to his praiſe*, Prov. 27. 21. The ſenſe is variouſly given; this ſeems to me moſt full and conſonant, (if *ch.* 17. 3. be compared, where the ſame compariſon is uſed), So is a man to the *trial of his Praiſe.* Others Commendations are to be caſt into the fining-pot of our own Conſciences: If theſe convince that we are droſs, what are we the better though they cry us up for Gold? Let thy Conſcience be good, or thei[illegible] *Commendatio* will not do good but hurt ** 'Tis not whom Man commendeth, but whom God commends, and Conſcience commends in and under God that is approved, 2 *Cor.* 10. 18. 1 *Joh.* 3. 20.

* *Non ideo bona eſt Conſcientia, quia vos illam laudatis. Quid enim laudatis quod non videtis?* Aug. de Verb. Dom. Serm. 49.

(5) *My Comforts will be great:* Who knoweth the great Comforts of a good Conſcience? Of which hereafter. 'Tis acknowledged that Comfort doth immediately grow rather out

of

of the Teſtimony of a good Conſcience, than out of its truth of goodneſs: But this is the root and fountain-head of it, that the Conſcience is truly good; and this ſtreams ſhame and conſternation to accuſers, ſupport and comfort to ſuch as have this good Conſcience, 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. 1 *Pet.* 3. 16. Let the fountains of the deep be broken up, this will be an Ark of ſafety from the Deluge, and a continual feaſt in the days of affliction and diſtreſs, 1 *Pet.* 3.21. *Prov* 15. 15.

(6) *My Crown will be glorious:* Aſſure the Conſcience good here, and I dare aſſure you the Crown of Glory hereafter. The good Conſcience hath its *record on high*, and is aſſured of its *reward on high*; Its Witneſs is in Heaven, and it enſureth a welfare in Heaven alſo. There is a great recompenſe of reward if you keep your Conſcience and caſt not away your confidence: No ſooner ſhall you have diſcharged your Conſciences, but God will deliver you the Crown: *I have fought a good fight*, ſaith *Paul*, *I have finiſhed my courſe, henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs, which the Lord the righteous Judg ſhall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them alſo that love his appearing*, Job 16. 19. Heb. 10. 35. 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8.

2*ly. Argue it with Conſcience:* Self-reaſoning conduceth much to ſelf-reformation, arguing with Conſcience to the amendment of Conſcience, *Pſal.* 42. 5, 11. & 43. 5. 1. Argue from its preferring honour; by this it is that I am differenced from, and dignified beyond the bruits. *Direct.* 2.

bruits; and ſhall my glory deſcend in ſhame? and my beſt honour in a worſe than brutiſh obſtinacy? ſhall their brutiſh goodneſs outbrave mine, who have the principles of a man, and bear the profeſſion of a Chriſtian? ſhall they know, and I not conſider? ſhall their knowledg be (according to its kind) good, and my Conſcience continue bad? Let mens credit be never ſo great, if their Conſcience be not therewith good, they are accounted no better than beaſts in the ſight of God, *Iſa.*1.3. *Jer.*8. 7. *Pſal.*49.20.

2. *From the place it holds:* 1. In Man; Conſcience is not placed in the lower ſenſitive and earthly; but in the higher, intellectual, and heavenly part of Man; ſhall my beſt be evil? my light darkneſs? my heaven-born power but as an earthen pitcher? If I be not good in this, where ſhould, where ſhall I be good? 2. Over Man; God hath given it dominion over the whole man, and 'tis to have the ducture in all matters; and ſhall not my Conſcience be good, whoſe command is ſo great? ſhall that abide yet further evil, whoſe authority is of ſo vaſt extent? 3. Under God; He hath made it a god to thee, as *Moſes* ſometimes was to *Pharaoh*, Exod. 7. 1. It is God's Vicegerent in thee, who is and doth good; and ſhall not this be good, that holds next under God?

3. *From the perfections it had:* How choice were they as Conſcience was created, and came off from the workmanſhip of God! [*Eccleſ.* 7. 29. *Col.* 3. 10. *Epheſ.* 4. 24.] And doth

doth not every Creature, even to the crawling worm, contend toward the recovery of its loſt perfection and proper good? Shall man then, or ſhall I only who am endowed with an intelligent and immortal Spirit, ſit down at reſt in the evil loſt by me, and not reach after the good that lieth before me, and is tendered to me?

4. *From the power it hath:* It can (as one ſaith *) do any thing but make evil good: Let Conſcience be bad, and it maketh not only an indifferent, but a good action bad (as before); Let Conſcience be good and it maketh an indifferent Action good; and though it doth not alter the nature, yet it abateth the malignity of an Action, that is in it ſelf evil; as in the Polygamy of the Patriarchs: And ſhould not this power be good, whoſe power is ſo great, both for evil and for good?

* *Auguſt. Lect. Ep. 5.*

5. *From the Principles it owneth:* 1. In Nature; Doth not even Nature it ſelf teach me, that my Conſcience be good, whatſoever pains it coſt me; or whatever be the perſecutions from men, wherewith it may be conſequenced? The very Heathens have therefore preſcribed means, and preſſed motives. 2. In Grace; how much more am I taught to exerciſe my ſelf herein, and engage my ſelf hereunto, by all the principles of godlineſs, and by all the Promiſes of the Goſpel?

6. *From the Offices it is to perform:* Can my Conſcience do well if it be evil? do not its Offices for God require, that it be holy and good? Conſcience hath the office of 1. A Miniſter,

niſter, and is therefore obliged to be good; a bad Miniſter being the worſt of Men, there is little hopes of its miniſtring good, unleſs it be a good Miniſter. 2. Of a Magiſtrate, who ſhould be moſt eminently and exemplarily good, and a Miniſter to thee for good. 3. Of a Witneſs: 4. And of a Judg; which muſt be good, or they will do evil; do evil themſelves, and not deliver Souls from extremity and injuſtice.

Direct. 3. 3*ly. Apply you to the Cauſes of a good Conſcience:* The Cauſes improved, the effect will enſue: Theſe are principal, or leſs principal.

(1) The Principal is God: *Every good and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the father of Lights.* The good Conſcience is from the God of Conſcience: The God that made thy Conſcience can alone make thy Conſcience good: *Acknowledg him then in all thy ways, and he ſhall direct thy paths.* Ask of him by prayer and ſtrong crys, as *David* did, *Thou art good, and doſt good, teach me thy Statutes: Incline my heart to thy Teſtimonies: Let my heart be ſound in thy Statutes: Create in me a clean heart, O God:* Jam. 1. 17, Pſal. 119. 36, 68, 80. 1. It proceedeth from the good-will of the Father: The Inſpiration of the Almighty giveth Underſtanding: 'Tis He that putteth Wiſdom in the inward parts, and giveth Underſtanding to the Heart. Preſs thy Heart to conſider it, and plead with him in Supplication; who delights to be urged with the liberouſneſs of his own acts of Grace; and giveth

giveth liberally to him that asketh: *Job* 32. 8. *c.* 38. 36. *Jam.* 1. 5. 2. It is procured by the great worth of the Son, who was made ſin for us, to take ſin from us; and in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, by a ſacrifice for ſin, hath condemned ſin in the fleſh, and ſo brings us to God, 2 *Cor.* 5. 21. 1 *Joh.* 3. 5. *Rom.* 8. 3. *marg.* 1 *Pet.* 3. 18. The good Conſcience coſts no leſs price than the Blood of God; the Blood of Chriſt was ſhed, that the beſmeared Conſcience might be ſprinkled and purged for the peculiar ſervice of God, *Act.* 20. 28. 1 *Pet.* 1. 18, 19. *Heb.* 10. 22. *c.* 9. 4. Apply then the meritorious and medicinal vertue that is in the Blood of Chriſt, for cure of thoſe maladies and bruiſes, that are in thy Conſcience: Apply it by an hand of Faith; make it thine: *Put thou on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt:* Bring it down to thy caſe, let this Blood be ſprinkled on thy Conſcience; apply it in ardent prayer; come unto God by him; preſent his Merit with thy malignity to Divine mercy: Plead his worthineſs in thy unworthineſs; his ſtripes for thy healing; the righteouſneſs of Chriſt for the renovation of thy Conſcience. Purſue thy petitions upon the price he hath paid. 3. It is produced by the gracious work of the Spirit. If Conſcience be ſpiritual and gracious it comes from the ſpirit of Grace; if pure, if holy, 'tis by the power of the Holy Ghoſt: 'Tis carnal till the Spirit comes; never ſpiritual till born of the Spirit: *It is the ſpirit of life which ſets it free from the law of ſin and death:* *Joh.* 3. 5. *Rom.* 15. 13, 16. *Rom.* 8. 2. What Evan-

Evangelical Truths are imprinted on the good Conſcience, they are of the Spirit's writing, 2 *Cor.*3.3. What Evangelical Teſtimony is imparted by the good Conſcience, 'tis of the Spirit's working; of his working for us, *who alſo witneſſeth therewith in us*, Rom.8.15. *c.*9.1. Put not off the Spirit then, in its motions and eſſays upon you which he maketh; ply to him with all diligence and dearneſs; put him not off with delays; much leſs ſhouldſt thou provoke him with a denial. Let *Steven* ſpeak why the *Jews* were uncircumciſed in heart, *Ye do always reſiſt the Holy Ghoſt*, Act. 7.51. Rather pray in the Spirit, which God hath promiſed to pour out: And who knows but Beggars may be bleſt in that branch of the Promiſes of his Grace? *I will put my ſpirit within you, and cauſe you to walk in my ſtatutes, and ye ſhall keep my judgments and do them:* Prov.1.23 Luk.11.13. Ezek.36.27.

(2) The leſs principal Cauſes are 1. an operative faith and love within you; 2. the ordinances for faith and love without you.

1. *Let there be an operative faith and love within you:* Theſe like *Judah* and *Simeon* his Brother come up into each others lots to ſubdue the *Canaanites*, and ſet right the Conſcience. Let there be Charity out of a pure heart, and Faith unfeigned, and thou canſt not be left without a good Conſcience; which the Apoſtle lodgeth in the midſt of theſe, as the Tabernacle of the Congregation was in the midſt of the Camp, *Judg.* 1.3. 1 *Tim.* 1.5. *Numb.* 2.17. Both of them have a bleſſed operation

ration and tendency, firſt to purifie, then to pacifie the Conſcience. Of which hereafter.

2. *Live in the Ordinances for Faith and Love:* Be much in Praying, Hearing, Reading, Meditation, Conference; the end of all theſe Commandments of God is to make thy Conſcience good: Cry after him, and continue in them for this end; make God's end thy errand to them; and your heart ſhall live that ſeek God, 1 *Tim.* 1. 5. *Pſal.* 69. 32. You wrong your own Souls that wave the Ordinances of our Saviour: How many an evil Conſcience hath been healed and cured by them! How many a bad Conſcience have been made good! and how many a good Conſcience have been made better! The way is as open to you, as it was to them; follow God in them; forſake not the ways of his Goſpel; you ſhall know if you follow on to know the Lord. Continue at the gates of Wiſdom; come for Wiſdom to her gates, and thou ſhalt not come off a loſer; yea, if thou crieſt after knowledg, and lifteſt up thy voice for underſtanding: *If thou ſeekeſt her as ſilver, and ſearcheſt for her as for hid treaſures; then ſhalt thou underſtand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledg of God,* Prov. 8. 33. *ad finem.* Hoſ. 6. 3. Prov. 2. 1.---6.

4. *Attend Conſcience throughout:* If Conſcience be not good throughly, 'tis not good truly. See that this goodneſs go throughout Conſcience: To this is requiſite 1. a right apprehenſion of principles; ſo that you muſt *Direct.* 4.

get

get Conſcience *well-principled*, for which God calls upon you; *My Son keep my words, and lay up my Commandments with thee: Let thine heart retain my words*, Prov.7.1. c.4. 4. 2. A right application of theſe principles, both as a witneſs, and as a judg; to which purpoſe (as I ſhall particularly direct hereafter, ſo) you muſt endeavour the right purifying and the right pacifying of your Conſciences; and get Conſcience both well-purified and well pacified; of which I ſhall ſpeak diſtinctly in the Queſtions that enſue, to which I muſt here diſmiſs you.

Q. 7. *How may we keep a good Conſcience?*

This Queſtion ſuppoſeth you in the poſ-
* *See Perkins, T.1. Treat. of Conſcience c.4. §.2. pag. 553. Sheff. good Conſ. c.25.* ſeſſion of a good Conſcience, and is ſubjoyn-
for the preſervation of your Conſcience good,
* with the goodneſs of Evangelical purity
immediately, and with the goodneſs of Evan-
gelical peace mediately and remotely, of which
more afterwards.

In order hereunto, there are ſome things to be declined and taken heed of, and others to be done and taken heed unto.

I. *Firſt*, There are ſome things in order hereunto to be declined, *viz.*

1. An itch after curious queſtions, frothy ſpeculations, fabulous and vain bablings in and about the matters of Religion; which will eat as a canker, effeminate the Conſcience and will encreaſe unto more ungodlineſs, from theſe withdraw: And let the words of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the doctrine which

is

is according to godlineſs take up your deliberations and diſcourſes; the end whereof is a good Conſcience, 2 *Tim.* 4. 3, 4. *c.* 2. 16, 17. 1 *Tim.* 6. 3, 4, 5. *c.* 1. 4, 5.

2. *Ill Companions:* Theſe corrupt both the Converſations and Conſciences of each other; witneſs *Hymeneus* and *Alexander*, *Hymeneus* and *Philetus*, *Phygellus* and *Hermogenes*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 19, 20. 2 *Tim.* 2. 17. *c.* 1. 15. As you would preſerve your Conſcience, partake not with their company unneceſſarily. Can a man take fire in his boſom and his Clothes not be burnt? Can one go upon hot coals and his Feet not be burnt? See how *Ahab*'s Company, and *Solomon*'s Concubines debauched his and *Jehoſhaphat*'s Conſcience, and drew upon them God's diſpleaſure, *Epheſ.* 5. 7, 11. *Prov.* 6. 27, 28. 2 *Chron.* 18. 3. *c.* 19. 2. 1 *King.* 11. 4, *&c.* Beware of the communion of evil men, as you would not blemiſh Conſcience in the eye of God, *Pſal.* 26. 4, 5. *c.* 119. 63. *Prov.* 13. 20. *c.* 14. 7.

3. *An idle, corrupt, and ſoothing Miniſtry, that lull Conſcience aſleep in ſin, or laſh the Conſcience of ſtrictneſs:* Theſe are the peſts of any people: *My Son ceaſe to hear the inſtruction that cauſeth to err from the words of knowledg: Hearken not unto the Prophets that make you vain, and ſpeak a viſion out of their own heart; crying peace, peace, when there is no peace,* Prov. 19. 27. Jer. 23. 16.----21. *c.* 6. 14. Ezek. 13. 10, *&c.* Attend rather the moſt ſtrict and ſoul-ſearching Miniſtry; enquire and take counſel from the Seer; whoſe Sermons are moſt ſharp

and ſearching even to the thoughts and intents of thy heart; follow theſe, and account of their correptions as an acceptable kindneſs, *Heb.* 13. 17. 1 *Sam.* 9. 9, 10, 18. *Heb.* 4. 12. 1 *Cor.* 14. 25. *Pſ.* 141. 5.

4. *Intemperance of all kinds, and toward any Creature-comforts, or Secular contentments:* Take heed to your ſelves, leſt at any time your Hearts be overcharged with any of them; be crucified to the World, and let the World be crucified to you; or Conſcience will be captivated by the World; the rational Will to the ſenſitive or brutiſh appetite. If you are ſet upon it that you will be rich, you ſhall be ſnared and enſlaved by it, and ſhall not be innocent, *Luk.* 21. 34. *Gal.* 6. 14. 1 *Tim.* 6, 9. *Prov.* 28. 20.

5. *Indulgence of any one corruption, which ſpeaks Conſcience already defective in its Office, and ſteals off its tenderneſs, &c. by degrees:* Sin is never at a ſtay; if Conſcience let alone Concupiſcence, it will ſoon conceive, quicken and bring forth, firſt ſin, then death, *Jam.* 1. 15. *Pſal.* 1. 1. You muſt exerciſe a good Conſcience if you would eſchew ſin; and eſchew ſin, every ſin, if you would exerciſe a good Conſcience; ſpecially eye the beginnings and entrance of ſin, that you be not hardened through the deceitfulneſs of ſin; *Principiis obſta*, Corruption gaineth by ſteps. *Peter* firſt caſts off fear, then cloſes with falſhood, then curſes and forſwears: His faint denial at firſt time fetcheth out a dreadful Oath at ſecond time, and a moſt daring imprecation the third, *Heb.* 3. 13.

3. 13. *Mat.* 26. 69.----75. Conſcience looſeth by ſteps alſo; Sin happily hath been unportable, now (it may be) it is heavy; take up betimes, within a while it will become portable, next time pleaſant to thee, and perhaps within a while, thou mayſt plead for it. To ſuch extremities ſome have arrived gradually as *Bernard* obſerveth *: Beware of ſecret ſins; theſe are a moth that eat out its integrity; beware of ſmaller ſins, theſe make way for greater, and do as ſurely, (though not as ſuddenly) ſink the veſſel of Conſcience as greater leaks, or the ſpringing of a plank doth. Beware of the ſhews and ſeeds, and inducements to ſin; come not nigh her corner, theſe contract careleſneſs upon Conſcience; admit not ſo much as thread or ſhoo-latchet; beware eſpecially of ſtaring and ſcandalous ſins, which are like the wild Boar of the Forreſt, to root up, rend and devour: *Refrain thy foot from every evil way*, Pſal. 19. 12, 17. Eccleſ. 10. 1. Jude 23. Pſal. 51. & 119. 101.

* *Primò importabile, proceſſu temporis grave, Paulò poſt leve, poſtea placet & dulce eſt. Ad extremum, quod erat impoſſibile ad faciendum, eſt impoſſibile ad continendum*, Bern. de Conſ. c. 3.

6. *Idling away the checks and convictions of Conſcience:* Obſerve its ſayings, as *Jacob* did *Joſeph's*, whilſt others do, as *Joſeph*'s Brethren did, envy it or them: If thou wilt be deaf to Conſcience now, Conſcience within a while may be dumb to thee: *David* doth not hear Conſcience, but haſtens into *Bathſheba*; and how long was it e're he heard from Conſcience? and when he doth, 'tis ſuch a voice as maketh his ears to tingle, and his heart to

tremble, *Gen.* 37. 11. 2 *Sam.* 11. & 12. *cum Pſal.* 51.

7. *Indiſpoſitions and evils of Conſcience:* What theſe are hath been premiſed; how theſe are beſt healed and cured, will be preſcribed hereafter: Beware of its ſleepineſs, ſearedneſs, *&c.* every diſeaſe hath a tendency toward a diſſolution, as in Nature, ſo alſo in Grace.

8. *Inforcing and violating Conſcience:* Sins againſt Conſcience are of ſaddeſt conſequence, and do of all others moſt wound and waſt the Conſcience. One ſin deliberately committed againſt the Dictates of Conſcience, doth more to the corrupting and defilement thereof than many others contracted through weakneſs: *David*'s ſin againſt the light of Conſcience loſt him the ſenſe and ſavour of a good Conſcience. Men that force Conſcience do at length flight Conſcience; and 'tis juſt with God, while theſe put away the good Conſcience which they ſeemed to have, that he pluck it away alſo; and that he puniſh this violence and their voluntary reſiſtance with a final remorſleſneſs, *Pſal.* 51. 10. 1 *Tim.* 1. 19. *Jer.* 9. 3. *Rom.* 1. 28.

9. *Inordinate cares, ſhame and fears, which overcharge Conſcience, and are offended with the Croſs:* You muſt expect contempt, and to endure the Croſs, if you will exerciſe and enjoy a good Conſcience; ſhame and fear decline thoſe, and you muſt therefore decline theſe; divert them rather upon their proper Objects: Be aſhamed and afraid of ſin as the greateſt evil, and of loſing the ſight and ſalvation

tion of God, who is the greateſt good, as you are adviſed by the Apoſtle for having a good Conſcience, 1 *Pet.* 3. 14,15, 16. *c.* 4. 12,13,16. 'Tis no matter of ſhame, or fear to ſuffer for Conſcience; 'tis a fearful thing indeed to ſuffer in or from Conſcience: But lo, this is *thankworthy* (an expreſſion beyond any other in all the Bible) *if a man for Conſcience toward God endure grief, ſuffering wrongfully*, 1 Pet. 2. 19.

Secondly, There are ſome things to be done: If you would enſure the cuſtody of a good Conſcience, II.

1. *Employ your ſtricteſt care:* Sin and Satan lay their main Batteries againſt this; the good Conſcience is the grand Citadel of a gracious Chriſtian; get this, and they get all; keep this and ye keep all. You are proportionably concerned to preſerve the outer guards in your Converſations; but you are principally concerned to preſerve the inner and main guard of your Conſcience: Keep this and it will keep thee: But remember as it was not gotten idly, ſo neither is it kept but with induſtry: Keep thy heart with diligence, nay with all diligence, and above all keeping; and good reaſon, *for out of it are the iſſues of life*, Prov. 2. 10, 11. *c.* 4. 20, 21, 23.

2. *Extend this care to all the ſorts and kinds of a good Conſcience:* To the pure, peaceable, ſincere, ſoft and tender Conſcience, *&c.* and touching which we ſhall inſtruct hereafter, yea and to the whole circuit and compaſs of Conſcience. Take a proſpect of every part, in every propoſition that it may be good, both as a

Rule, and as a Witneſs, and as a Judg: Of which alſo you may expect in the enſuing parts of this Diſcourſe.

3. *Hear Conſcience:* Conſcience hath a voice within you, as well as Chriſt in his Word without you; a voice * of correction in caſe of evil; *Why art thou caſt down, O my ſoul, &c? Pſal.* 43. 5. A voice of counſel and direction, for continuance and growth in good, as *David*'s had, *My reins alſo inſtruct me in the night-ſeaſon,* Pſal. 16. 7. *Hear counſel then, and receive inſtruction, that thou mayſt be wiſe in the latter end.* Conſcience never hardens till it is not heard; the more attention is given by you, the more authority is gained to it, and the better adviſe it giveth to you. Attend the directions and diſcourſe of Conſcience then, as *Joſeph* and *Nehemiah* did, who thereby kept an unſpotted Conſcience, amidſt all aſperſions and calumnies, *Prov.* 19. 20. *Gen.* 39. 9. *Neh.* 6. 11.

4. *Eſtate it often by its Copy, or Original, rather the Holy Scriptures:* Theſe are the παράδειγμα, the prime rule and ſtandard by which you muſt paſs and ſquare Conſcience; Chriſtians muſt write them a Copy of this Law in the Book of Conſcience, if they would be kept incorrupt and from crooked ways, and examine this exſcript often by that, as the Kings of *Iſrael* muſt. Conſcience is to be inſtead of a mouth to Scriptures, as *Aaron* was to *Moſes*; but the Scripture is to be inſtead of a God to Conſcience, as *Moſes* was to *Aaron*, *Deut.* 17. 17, 18, 19. *Exod.* 4. 16. Conſcience is to every

man

man as his Book (as *Bernard* * well obſerveth); but ſuch as muſt be examined by the Bible, compared with and corrected by it: *Order my ſteps in thy Word*, ſaith *David*. *Thy Teſtimonies alſo are my delight, and my counſellors*, Pſal. 119. 133, 24. Order Conſcience by this, through all its offices and proceeds. Is Conſcience a rule? The Word muſt be the *Regula regulans*; Conſcience is but *Regula regulata*; Conſcience muſt take the rule from Chriſt in his Word, and then give it to the Chriſtian, for the weighing of his Eſtate and Actions: The Word is the lamp for the feet, and light for the paths, *Pſal.* 119. 105. Is Conſcience a witneſs? If you look that it witneſs the Truth and in truth, have it to the Law and to the Teſtimony, *Iſa.* 8. 20. Is Conſcience a Judg? If you would have it judg righteous judgment, away with it to the Word of Righteouſneſs, which ſhall judg you in the laſt day, *Joh.* 12. 48.

* *Unicuiq; ſuus libet eſt conſcientia. Conferamus itaque libros noſtros cum libro vitæ, ne fortè in illa ultima diſcuſſione abjiciantur ſi non fuerint emendati.* De Conſ. l. 1. c. 9.

5. *Engage the choice and conſtant reſolutions of your wills:* It is well with Conſcience while the Will is conſtant, and cleaves unto God with full purpoſe; let the Will be preſerved ſteady, and its welfare will be preſerved in ſafety: The weal of Conſcience much-what follows the Will's choice, and when this is found divided, that is faulty and diſeaſed, *Act.* 11. 23. *Hoſ.* 10. 2. 'Tis ſaid, 1 *Tim.* 1. 19. they put away a good Conſcience, and concerning Faith made ſhip-wrack. Their loſs did not a-

riſe as from its next cauſe, from other's violence, but their own voluntarineſs; Satan, ſeducers, ſufferings could never have pulled it away, if they themſelves had not put it away: They made ſhip-wrack rather than endured ſhip-wrack. Well then, if you would ſtill have a good Conſcience, be willing in all things to live honeſtly, *Heb.* 13. 18.

6. *Eye God's all-ſeeing knowledg:* Let thy Conſcience keep its eye upon God, who keepeth his eye upon thy Conſcience: Set the Lord alway before thy face with *David*; and ſet thy ſelf always before the face of the Lord with *Paul.* As of God, as in the ſight of God, ſo ſteer thy whole courſe: Keep thy Conſcience on God, and God will keep thy Conſcience, who hath ſaid, *Walk before me and be thou perfect*, Pſal. 16. 8. 2 Cor. 2. 17. Gen. 17. 1. Conſcience is a knowledg together with the Lord; look to it then in every creek and turn of thy life; *Doth not he that pondereth the heart conſider it? and he that keepeth thy ſoul, doth not he know it?* Prov. 24. 12. Pſal. 44. 21. The proſpect *David* took of Gods omniſcient knowledg, preſerved a tender, gracious, and holy Conſcience, *Pſal.* 139. *I have kept his precepts and thy teſtimonies*, ſaith he elſewhere; *for all my ways are before thee.* Eye him that is inviſible with *Moſes*, whoſe eye is upon all thy goings: Tell Conſcience as *Laban* told *Jacob*, *No man is with us: But ſee, God is witneſs betwixt me and thee.* And forget not his *Mizpah* (that is a Beacon or Watch-tower), and ſay to it with him, *The Lord watch between me and thee,*

thee, when we are abſent one from another, Pſal. 119.168. Heb.11.27. Gen.31.49,50.

7. *Exerciſe your ſelves to have always a good Conſcience:* So Paul, *Herein do I exerciſe my ſelf to have always a Conſcience void of offence toward God, and toward men*, Act. 24. 16. Conſcience will not be enſured or preſerved without conſideration, exerciſe and pains. 1. Co-united endeavours there muſt be, as reſpects the ſubject; *Herein do I exerciſe my ſelf*; ἀνδὸς ἀσκῶ, this is his ſtudy, his labour, his work, his buſineſs, which took up his outward, ſpecially his inward man: Of ſo large an import is that word. Here is matter enough to take up the whole Man, Mind, Memory, Will, Affections, Members; which had need be all imployed, either for informing of, or conforming to Conſcience. (2) Continued endeavours they muſt be, as reſpects the circumſtances, *Herein do I exerciſe my ſelf always*-----.Let the times frown, or favour the good Conſcience; let Conſcience ſmite or ſmile, whether you are under the arreſts of Judgment, or the happy liberties of mercy? whether men ſpeak well or ill? whether the Candle of the Lord ſhine upon you on the one hand; or the calumnies of men, like ſo many arrows ſtick faſt in you on the other: whatever buſineſs be before you, this buſineſs muſt not be behind, or be neglected by you; and herein uſe an holy conſtancy, as you would maintain an holy Conſcience, and be able to ſay with *Paul*, *I have lived in all good Conſcience before God until this day*, 1 Pet.3.15. Job 27. 6. (3) Comprehenſive endeavours they muſt be,

be, both as reſpects the ſtate of Conſcience, that it be void of offence, and the objects it regardeth; likewiſe both toward God and toward man. Keep the Conſcience inoffenſive if you would keep it entire, and Evangelically good; ἀπρόσκοπον, which is ſometimes paſſively taken, *Phil.* 1. 10. Sometimes actively, 1 *Cor.* 10. 32. that Conſcience neither give, nor take offence; either offend, or be offended: Eye Conſcience in both kinds, and herein exerciſe your ſelves conſtantly, nor only as reſpects God, nor only as reſpects man, but as reſpects both God and Man; firſt as reſpects God, then as reſpects Man. Let Religion toward God and Righteouſneſs toward Man be your continued exerciſe, and you will neither impair the tranquillity, nor injure the tenderneſs of your Conſcience, *Job* 2. 3. *Pſal.* 15. *Iſa.* 33. 15, 16. Conſcience hath both Tables of the Law committed originally to it. The Conſcience again committeth them as *Joſiah* did to the other Powers as its inferior Officers; when theſe bring Conſcience word, as *Shaphan* brought the King back word again, ſaying, *All that was committed to thy ſervants they do it:* Then we have both a ſincere and inoffending, and alſo a ſecure and inoffended Conſcience, 2 *Chr.* 34. 15, 16.

8. *Exerciſe Conſcience oftner, if you would have it always good:* The weal of Conſcience lyes much-what within the walls of conſcience. If you vvould keep conſcience vvell, you muſt keep

keep conſcience at vvork; ſloth vvill beget ſickneſs, beget ſin; and incenſe juſtice, to take away your talent, *Mat.* 25.28, 2. (1) Be frequent in examining Conſcience; ask how the caſe ſtands? the frequent'ſt trier is uſually the forward'ſt thriver in the School of Chriſt, and of Conſcience, as well as of humane Literature. The more you prove and examine Conſcience, the more you provoke and engage it for after-times, and improve the experiences antecedent, *Pſal.* 77. 6, *&c.* (2) Be forward in exciting Conſcience: Is it incident to drowſineſs, diſtempers, deadneſs? call upon it the oftener, rouſe it up by awakening Conſiderations; thy Conſcience is keeper of the Vineyards, the other faculties; and thine own Vineyard haſt thou not kept? Put it in remembrance of its duty, and thy danger: Provoke it by arguments of mercy, and alarums of juſtice; that if thou muſt ſay with the Spouſe, *I ſleep*, yet thou may'ſt ſay with her, *my heart waketh*, *Pſal*, 108. 2. *Cant.* 1.6. *c.* 5.2. (3) Be faithful in exonerating Conſcience: Whatever Conſcience directed by the Word of God dictateth, fail not to do it; whatever it forbids thee, forbear it; elſe thou teacheſt Conſcience to forbear thee; limiting Conſcience, and not liſtning to Conſcience are a ready way to the loſing of Conſcience. 'Tis miſerable, when men are churliſh with Conſcience; and it muſt be ſaid of you, as *Nabal's* ſervants ſaid of him, He is ſuch a ſon of *Belial*, that Conſcience cannot ſpeak to him, 1 *Sam.* 25. 17. Liſten to

Conſci-

Conſcience then, and be led by it, ſo ſhalt thou live in all good Conſcience. As God ſaid to *Abraham*, ſo ſay I to thee, *In all that Sarah* (in all that Conſcience) *ſhall ſay unto thee, hearken unto her voice:* If you would hold a good Conſcience obey a good Conſcience; if it may not be heard, it will away: If it may command thee, it will continue with thee, *Act.* 23. 1. *Gen.* 21. 12. 2 *Tim.* 1. 3. 1 *Tim.* 3. 9.

9. *Exerciſe the good, that is in and with your Conſcience:* Actuate and imploy your implanted habits of Grace, and theſe will grow into greater increaſes: Keep up the lively exerciſe of Faith, Love and Repentance; and you keep up the exerciſe and enjoyment of a good Conſcience: Theſe ſay to Conſcience as *David* ſometime did to *Abiathar*, *Abide with us; fear not; he that ſeeketh thy life, ſeeketh our life: With us thou ſhalt be in ſafety*, Prov. 4. 18. 1 Sam. 22. 23. Rinſe Conſcience upon every fall thou catcheſt from the filth which thou contracteſt in the waters of repentance. The more tears of Contrition, the more tenderneſs of Conſcience, and tranſcendent comfort, *Pſal.* 51. *Job* 11. 14, 15. Raiſe and quicken Faith; this will ſubdue enemies without, ſanctifie Conſcience within, ſprinkle the blood of Jeſus on it, and ſuck continued virtue from his bleſſed promiſes, 1 *Joh.* 5. 4, 5. *Act.* 26. *Heb.* 10. 22, 23. Repeat and continue the dear and delicious acts of Love, which will facili-

facilitate the Commandments to you, free Conſcience in you, and fits you to whatever capacity Chriſt ſhall call you, 1 *Joh.*5. 3. 1 *Cor.*13.4.----8.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Of the Pure and Defiled Conſcience.

Q. 1. *Whether the Conſcience in man be naturally pure or defiled?*

Touching this I muſt return you to what hath been already ſpoken, [*Chap.* 2. *Queſt.* 2. *and* 3.

Q. 2. *Whether a pure Conſcience be attainable by man in this life?*

THere is a double purity of the Conſcience; 1. Exact and legal, as fully anſwers to what the Law asks: 2. Evangelical and more large, as fitly agrees with what the Goſpel allows: That excludes all degrees of pollution, and includes all degrees of perfection; this allows no degree of pollution, and aſpires after the higheſt degree of perfection.

1. *That legal and exact purity of the Conſcience neither can, nor ever was attained ſince the Fall by any meer man in this life:* 1. Who was ever priviledged in this life from the pollution of Conſcience? *Who can ſay I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my ſin? Who can underſtand his errors?* *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?* (as man is) *not*

one

one. There is not a juſt man upon the earth that doth good and ſinneth not, Prov.20.9. Pſal.19. 12. Job 14.4. Eccleſ. 7. 20. 2. Who was ever poſſeſſed in this life with the perfection of Conſcience? Conſcience is never perfected till the Chriſtian is perfected, and the body of ſin, and this ſinful body be put off fully, 1 *Cor.* 13. 10, *&c. Phil.* 3. 12, *&c. What is man that he ſhould be clean?* His Conſcience is miſerably polluted and ſeared, who durſt pretend to perfection in the ſight of God, and wretchedly deceiveth himſelf, and denieth the Scriptures of God, *Job* 15. 14, 15, 16. *c.* 25. 4, 5, 6. *c.* 11.4, 5. 1 *Joh.* 1.1, 8, 10.

2*ly.* This Evangelical purity of the Conſcience is attainable in this life, and ſhould be attained; 'tis poſſible we may, and God's pleaſure that that we do, and muſt endeavour for and enſure it: Lo,

1. Man is admoniſhed, and called upon for it; *Purifie your hearts ye double minded. Waſh your hearts from your wickedneſs*: Have them ſprinkled from an evil Conſcience: Purge your ſelves, cleanſe your ſelves from all filthineſs of the ſpirit: Hold the myſtery of faith in a pure Conſcience, which implicitely requireth that you have a pure Conſcience, wherein to hold it. In ſhort, the end of the Commandment is Charity out of a pure heart, and of a good Conſcience, *Jam.*4.8. *Jer.*4.14. *Heb.* 10.22. 2 *Tim.* 2.21. 2 *Cor.* 7.1. 1 *Tim.* 3.9. *c.* 1.5.

2. *Means are afforded and communicated for it*: Without us, the Word and Ordinances; within

within us, Faith, Hope, *&c.* Above us the Blood and Spirit of Chriſt, whereby the Conſcience may be *purged from dead works*: Of which ſome things have been premiſed, and more will be ſubjoyned hereafter, [Q. 5.] If this mercy were not to be attained, wherefore are theſe means? they were (as to this) in vain, and to no purpoſe appointed.

3. *Many have attained it:* Paul thanks God, *whom he ſerved from his forefathers with a pure Conſcience.* The Deacons held the myſtery of faith in a pure Conſcience: Wherefore ſhould I multiply inſtances? in whomſoever there was or is a living faith, and lively hope it did, and doth purifie the Heart and Conſcience, 2 *Tim.* 1. 3. 1 *Tim.* 3. 9. *Act.* 15. 9. 1 *Joh.* 3. 3. In ſhort whoſoever believeth, is pure, hath all things pure to himſelf, and his Mind and Conſcience purified in him, *Tit.* 1. 15.

Q. 3. *Whether a Man's Conſcience may be habitually impure and defiled, and he not apprehenſive of it.*

Though all the Sons of Men may know *de facto*, and ſhould know *de jure*; Whether their Conſciences are pure or polluted; yet many a man's Conſcience is habitually impure and polluted, and he knoweth it not. 1. Witneſs Scriptures; *There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, yet is not waſhed from their filthineſs*, Prov. 30. 12. *Laodicea* ſaith, *I am rich and increaſed with goods, and have need of nothing, and knoweth not that ſhe is wretched and*

and miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked. Inſtances would be endleſs, *Luk.* 18. 11, 12. *Iſa.*65.5. 2. What elſe is the work of the Spirit, of the Scriptures, and of the ſervants of God by office, but to convince of ſin, and ſhut up the Conſcience of ſinners in the ſenſe of their ſinful condition, to open their eyes, and turn them from darkneſs to light, that they that ſee not may ſee the defiled and deplorable ſtate in which they have been and yet are, and be at length convicted (as thoſe *Phariſees* were) by their own Conſcience, *Joh.* 16. 8, 9. *Act.* 26. 18. *Pſal.* 19. 8. *Joh.* 9. 39. *c.* 8. 9. Shall I point you whence it ariſeth; 1. Partly from want of ſelf-diſcuſſion; Conſcience is ſeldom or never put to the queſtion by them, or they by Conſcience: They conſider not in their hearts: *Heb.* They ſay not to their hearts: *Hoſ.* 7. 2. How could thoſe looſe and wicked wretches ſo inſolently inſiſt upon it, *We are wiſe, and the law of the Lord is with us:* But that they *held faſt deceit, and no man ſaid in his heart, what have I done,* Jer. 8. 5, 6. *cum* 9. 2. Principally from a wretched ſelf-indulgence: Self-love flatters men into a fond opinion of themſelves, and pride inflames them into a fooliſh oſtentation; and both render them averſe to the knowledg of the worſt by themſelves, afraid that Conſcience do its work with much ſtrictneſs, and arms them alſo againſt forreign arguments and convictions, with defenſive pleas and pretenſions; let him hear the words of the Curſe, *Yet he bleſſeth himſelf in his own heart, ſaying, I ſhall have peace, though*

I walk in the imagination of mine heart, &c. Deut. 29. 19.

Q. 4. *How may we know whether our Conſciences are habitually pure or defiled?*

Put Conſcience to it, preſs home upon your hearts, as in the preſence of the moſt high God, theſe three Queſtions which I here preſent and tender you.

First, What is thy Conſcience purified in? If Conſcience be purified at all, 'tis purified in all, in every orb, every office, every part and proper *officine* of the Conſcience; 'tis frequently called the *perfect heart*, 1 *King.* 15. 14. 1 *Chron.* 28. 9. *c.* 29. 19. 2 *Chron.* 25. 2. Underſtand it of an integral perfection; there is no part of Conſcience but is purified. 1. Conſcience is pure as a law; it conſerveth pure and holy laws, and becauſe they are very pure, therefore doth this ſoul love them, *Pſal.* 19. 8. *c.* 119. 140. 2. Conſcience is pure, as it applyeth this law; as for the pure his work is right; that which this Conſcience eyes is purity, both in it ſelf, and in what is ſubordinated to it, by all the acts (generally) it puts forth, *Prov.* 21. 8. *Heb.* 10. 22. 'Tis an heart after God's own heart, and therefore with the pure will ſhew himſelf pure, and preſerves the myſteries of faith in a pure mind and Conſcience, 1 *Sam.* 13. 14. *Pſal.* 18. 26. 1 *Tim.* 3. 9. Call Conſcience then before thee; commune with thy own heart. Hath the water of purifying paſſed upon the whole Conſcience? Is every veſſel thereof

thereof like thoſe in *Solomon's* houſe of pure Gold? Do you love pureneſs of heart? Would you approve your ſelves in all things, by pureneſs as the ſervants of God? And whatſoever things are pure do you think on them, and that with beſt complacence and moſt contentation? Then are your Conſciences purified, *Pſal.* 4. 4. 1 *King.* 10. 21. *Prov.* 22. 11. 2 *Cor.* 6. 4, 6. *Phil.* 4. 8.

Secondly, What is my Conſcience purified from? The pure Conſcience in Scripture ſtands oppoſed not only to that which is defiled, *Tit.* 1. 15. but to that which is double, *Purifie your hearts ye double-minded*, Jam. 4. 8. Let me ask then, and thy heart anſwer:

1. *Is thy Conſcience purified from its doubleneſs?* This is ſpecially when Conſcience will be making or maintaining a coalition and compounding of intereſts; uniting and contempering of gain and godlineſs; God and the World; or as the *Samaritans*, *Fearing the Lord and ſerving their own Gods*, 1 Tim. 6. 5. Jam. 4. 4. 2 King. 17. 33. Enquire, then 1. into the object, whereto it doth or ſhould determine thee. Is not thy heart divided between God and Mammon? If ſo, thou art verily faulty. But is it united to fear God's name? There is none that Conſcience bids thee purſue by deſire like him, or binds thee to pleaſe in and by thy duties like him, or to promote his deſigns of glory, equal with him, *Pſal.* 86. 11. c. 73. 25. 1 *Theſ.* 2. 4. 2. Enquire into the offices, whereunto it directs thee. Doſt thou renounce the hidden things of diſhoneſty; durſt you not

walk in craftineſs, or handle the Word of God deceitfully, by contempering fleſh and ſpirit in thy work as Vintners do in their Wines, καπηλεύοντες. But wouldſt thou every office thou preſenteſt, ſhouldſt be a pure offering, every prayer a pure prayer? And that which thou principally coveteſt therein is, that thou mayſt call on the Lord out of a pure heart? 2 *Cor.* 4. 2. *Mal.* 1. 11. *Job* 16. 17. 2 *Tim.* 2. 22. 3. Enquire into the openneſs, ſimplicity and unguilful diſpoſition of thy Conſcience: What haſt thou an heart, and an heart (as thoſe *Pſal.* 12. 2. *marg.*) one for God, another for *Baal*, for the world? Miſerable! the pure Conſcience is a plain Conſcience; 'tis clothed with ſimplicity and godly ſincerity; 'tis a ſpirit in which is no guile. Durſt you not double then in the matters of Conſcience? nor diſſemble in the matters of corruption? Art willing God ſhould ſee the worſt of thee, and ſhew thee the very worſt of thy ſelf? Doſt thou expoſe all to his ſearch, and wouldſt approve all in his ſight, and not ſo much as have thy heart ſecretly enticed from himſelf? This is a pure Conſcience. 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. *Pſal.* 32. 2. 1 *Chron.* 12. 33. *Pſal.* 119. 23, 24. *Job* 31. 27.

2. Is thy Conſcience purified from its defilement? I know you are not purified from all degrees of ſin; are you from all the kinds of ſin? You are not purified from the actual ſtain of them; but are you from the habitual ſtate in them? this is God's promiſe and the Goſpel-purity of the Conſcience, *I will cleanſe you from all your filthineſs*, Ezek. 36. 25.

25, 26, 33. c. 37. 23. I know none can ſay, and ſpeak truly, his Heart is clean from all adheſion of ſin to him, or from activity of ſin in him. But can you ſay, my heart is clean from the approbation of any ſin by it, and from the allowance of any ſin in it? (1) What ſay you to an habitual courſe in ſin? I know there are wicked works found with you: but is there no wicked way found in you? Do you refrain your feet from every evil way? Though you fall into the mire with the ſheep, do not you wallow in the mire with the Swine: Do you waſh off the repeated ſpots of your ſins by the renewed ſtreams of godly ſorrow to repentance? elſe never call it a pure Conſcience, *Pſal.* 139. 24. *Pſal.* 119. 101. 2 *Pet.* 2. 22. *Mich.* 6, 11. (2) What ſay you to the authority and command of ſin. Doth Conſcience woo and welcome it? or witneſs and war againſt it, and waſh it ſelf afreſh in the blood of Chriſt, and waters of Contrition, when it hath contracted guilt and filth by the power or policies of it. Is Conſcience pure from its reign, though ſhe cannot preſerve you from its rage? Sin may pollute your Conſcience, and for preſent captivate it: But doth not Conſcience give up her ſelf to the commands thereof, but grieves rather that ſhe ſhould ſo be contaminated? And when captivated, doth Conſcience raiſe complaints in, and recollect the other powers of the Soul? And doth ſhe run to Chriſt, renew the quarrel, and reinforce her ſtrength, for another combate, and reſolve never to quit the field till

she carrieth the victory, and the Crown be fixed upon the head of Christ? This is a pure Conscience, *Rom.* 6. 12.---23. c. 7. 15.---*ult.*

(3) What say you to the hearts closing with sin? Are you pure from the indulgence of sin, though you cannot be from the in-dwelling of sin? Do you hate all false ways? Is there never an *Herodias*, that your Hearts hug and cherish? Are you for taking away all iniquity? Is thy Conscience afraid of all, abhorrent from all, arms against all? Secret as well as open? Such as serve the interest of the flesh, as well as such as straiten it? And would you keep your selves unspotted from the world, unspotted from the flesh, as well as unswallowed up by the world, or by the flesh? This speaks you to have a pure Conscience, *Psal.* 119. 104, 128, *Hos.* 14. 2. *Psal.* 19. 12. & 13. *Jam.* 1. 27. *Jude* 23.

Thirdly, What is thy Conscience purified unto: (1) To what as thy employment? The pure Conscience is for the purest carriage, after the purest Copy, 1 *Joh.* 3. 3. This is the Temple of God, the very floor of whose house, as was that of *Solomon's*, is over-laid with pure Gold, both within and without, 1 *Cor.* 3. 17. 1 *King.* 6. 30. Search the acts and offices of Conscience then; is Godliness the greatest employment, which it commands the other powers of the Soul, and wherein it most congratulates it self? If it be purified from sin, 'tis for the service of God; if from dead works, 'tis to serve the living God, 2 *Tim.* 1. 3. *Tit.* 2. 14. *Heb.* 9. 14. (2) To what as thy enjoyment?

ment? The pure Conſcience is for the pureſt comforts; not ſo much for thoſe which run out of the muddy Ciſterns of Creatures, but for ſuch as riſe out of the unmixed ſprings of Communication with God in Chriſt, and the intimate ſenſe of his quickning and conſerving influences: Nor doth it ever enjoy it ſelf with that ſerenity, as in the evidence of God's grace to him; or in the exerciſe of his grace in and by him: This is its rejoycing, this its reſt, *Pſal.* 65. 4. 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. *Pſal.* 116. 7. Enquire then, what are thoſe enjoyments wherein Conſcience giveth thee the greateſt content and complacency? Are they the impurer objects and operations of Senſe, or the purer acts and objects of the ſpirit of Faith? Here is that pure river of the water of life, wherein the pure Conſcience doth moſt bath and bleſs it ſelf, *Phil.* 4. 7. *Rom.* 15. 13. *Rev.* 22. 1. (3) To what as thy end? The pure Conſcience puts forth its acts, both imperate and elicite, upon the pureſt accompt, and for the pureſt ends; *with pure Conſcience.* The Intentions to which it determineth the Will are not, as the Feet in *Nebuchadnezar*'s Image, part of Iron, and part of Clay, but like that Image's Head of fine Gold: 'Tis a Conſcience toward God, 2 *Tim.* 1. 3. *Dan.* 2. 32, 33. 1 *Pet.* 2. 19. Enquire then whether the praiſe of God be that principal end which you prefer in and above all, that Conſcience carrieth you out to enterprize? whether you do not mingle your glory with his, or make his glory ſerve yours? If God hath purified thy Conſcience, it is peculiarly

liarly for himself, as the sole supream end and object of it. And the Apostle offers us this observation, *That whatsoever is done heartily (i.e.* of pure Conscience) *is done unto the Lord, and not unto men*, Phil. 1.20. Joh. 5.44. c. 12.43. Tit. 2.14. Col. 3.23. Ephes. 6.6,7.

Q. 5. *How may we get or obtain a pure Conscience?*

Answ. This enquiry is not how we may get it pure from some new actual tincture, (of which see Q. 7.) but from its old habitual taint and pollution: for which take these Directions.

1. *Behold the necessity of a pure Conscience and be awakened:* (1.) Without this there is no Society with God: He is of purer eyes than to entertain you in your habitual impurity: There is no having, nor so much as hoping Communion with, or a propriety in him, unless Conscience be purified in you, *Hab.* 1.13. *Psal.* 18.26. 1 *Joh.* 3.3. *Jam.* 4.8. (2.) Without this there is no Salvation by God. Wash thine Heart as ever thou wouldst to Heaven: There is nothing entereth which is unclean; that happy place is reserved only for the *pure in heart*, *Jer.* 4.14. *Rev.* 21.27. *Psal.* 24.3,4. A polluted Conscience is neither fit for the business, nor blessedness of that pure and perfect condition. (3.) Without this, there is no serving of God; at least with acceptance to him, or with advantage to you. The Heart must be purified that would attempt his Presence,

ſence, *Joſh.* 24.19. *Heb.*9.14. c.10.22. *Jam.*4.8. Till Conſcience be purified the pure God will not endure thy preſence, nor will thy impure Conſcience eaſily bear his Preſence. (4) Without this there is no ſincerity in thee. Clean or pure acts will never put ye beyond an hypocrite, without a clean or pure Heart. 'Tis not a pure Converſation, but a pure Conſcience, that ſpeaks thy condition proſperous and ſecures from the condemnation of Phariſees, *Pſal.* 73. 1. 2 *Tim.* 1. 3. *Mat.* 23. 25.----29. (5) Without this there is no ſecurity for thee; thy condition can never be ſafe, till Conſcience be ſanctified: All that God ſecures Conſcience is but on this condition, If thou be pure and upright. And for the ſecurity of Conſcience, 'tis grounded upon the ſincerity of Conſcience, 'tis firſt pure, then peaceable, as *David* points us in his prayer; and 'tis the pure in Heart are firſt pronounced Bleſſed by our Saviour, 1 *Theſ.*5.23. *Job* 8.6. *Jam.*3.17. *Pſ.* 51. 7,8. *Mat.*5.8.

2. *Behold the nature of an impure Conſcience, and be aſhamed:* Thou art not ſo pure in thine own eyes, but thou art as impure and vile in God's eyes. Be convinced of this, and thou wilt be cleanſing that, and begging him to cleanſe thee, *Prov.* 30. 12. *Iſa.* 65. 5. *Mich.* 6. 11, 13. *Job* 40.4. (1) Think what is defiled, Conſcience, that choice, that curious piece, that ſo dignifieth Man next the Angels, and differenceth him from the Brutes. Conſcience that is God's Tabernacle in Man, and maketh Man the Temple of God. Conſcience that is

chief

chief among the faculties, and is under God to command the whole frame of our Hearts and Lives: What, Conſcience! that by Creation, was (like the *Nazarites*) purer than Snow, whiter than Milk, more ruddy than Rubies; whoſe poliſhing was of Saphire, ſhould be now blacker than a coal, and ſhe that was clothed in Scarlet ſhould embrace Dunghils! That thy Gold ſhould become thus dim, and the moſt fine Gold be changed into dirt! This cannot but procure a Lamentation; eſpecially when thou ſhalt conſider, that this thou haſt contracted upon thy ſelf; who knoweſt, how great a crime it is, if through thy means the Conſcience but of a weak brother ſhould be defiled, *Prov.*20.27. 1 *Cor.*3.17. *Lam.*4.1.—9, 1 *Cor.* 8.7. (2) Think what it doth defile: A defiled Conſcience 1. defiles all of thee; it defiles the Man, the whole Man, the Spirit, Soul and Body are defiled, even the Mind, the moſt pure and precious part is defiled, whereſoever the Conſcience is defiled, *Mat.* 15.18, 1 *Theſ.* 5.23. *Tit.* 1.15. 2. It defiles all to thee, there is nothing pure to thee, The taking of God's Covenant into thy mouth, thy very Table-comforts, thy Meat become a ſin and ſnare to thee. Conſcience being unclean, whatever it toucheth doth become unclean likewiſe, *Tit.* 1.15. *Pſal.* 50.16, 17. & 69.22. *Lev.*5.2. 3. It defiles all that comes from, or is done by thee. It ſtreams ſin upon every ſervice. Thy Civil actions, thy very plowing is ſin; and thy ſacred actions, thy very praying is ſin likewiſe; *For who can bring a clean thing out*

of

of an unclean? Mat. 15. 18. Prov. 21. 4. c. 28. 9. *Job* 14. 4.

3. *Betake ye to the known proviſion which God hath made for purifying the Conſcience, and be active:* The pure Conſcience is from God as the principal Cauſe; 'tis he that purifieth, and he that pacifieth the Conſcience: He that cureth its diſeaſes, and cleanſeth it from defilements: He creates, and ſo the Heart is clean, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 23. *Ezek.* 36. 25. *Pſal.* 51. 7, 10. But though it be his work principally, 'tis our work partly too, as himſelf preſſeth it; *Waſh ye, make you clean, &c.* Iſa. 1, 16. 'Tis his work to bleſs the means unto purifying, and our work to be in the uſe of thoſe means, whereby he purifieth: Asking the mercy of him, and applying the means to us: (1) Then ask this mercy from him, with the greateſt ardour thou may'ſt; acknowledging thy pollution with ſhame and ſorrow, aggravating it alſo in his preſence, abhorring thy ſelf; and acknowledg with thy impotency his power, as who alone can purifie thee: So *David*, *Pſal.* 51. 2.——11. His promiſes of it do not preclude, but ſhould provoke rather thy prayers for it, *Ezek.* 36. 25. *cum* 37. (2) Apply thee to the means, and the means to thee, with the greateſt activity thou can'ſt: Theſe are the Word, Water, and Blood *. [1] The Word, *Ye are clean through the Word*, ſaith Chriſt, *Joh.* 15. 3. This is not only pure in it ſelf, but purifying the Soul that attendeth the preaching of it, *Pſal.* 19. 8. *Joh.* 17. 17. *Epheſ.* 5. 26. Submit thy Conſcience to the Commands of it:

* See Sheffield's good Conſ. c. 2. p 33. &c.

Purity

Purity is the end of them, and will be the effect in thee, 1 *Tim.* 1. 5. 1 *Pet.* 1.22. If you obey; Then 2. Skill thy Conſcience in the Promiſes of it. Every Promiſe is both a motive to and means for cleanſing, as of the fleſh, ſo likewiſe of the Spirit. But there is an eſpecial Promiſe in God's abſolute Covenant, *I will ſprinkle clean water on you, and ye ſhall be clean:* Which you may urge upon your ſelf in ſecret, and urge God with in ſupplication, 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. *Jer.* 33. 8. *Ezek.* 3. 6. 25. *cum* 37. [2] Water, *Ezek.* ibid. *Epheſ.* 5. 26. The Sacrament of Water ſhould not only be remembred by thee, but re-inforced on thee, by due and doubled conſideration: Though I cannot ſay to thee as *Ananias* ſaid unto *Saul*, *Ariſe and be Baptiſed, and waſh away thy ſins*; if thou wert baptized in thy infancy, yet I muſt counſel thee to apply thy Baptiſm by fetching arguments from thence, and by eying the ability and efficacy of the Blood and Spirit of Chriſt, thereby exhibited, till thou findeſt the anſwer thereunto of a good Conſcience toward God: And then thy Infant-baptiſm will be as effectual to the waſhing away of thy ſins in thy adult eſtate, as the Circumciſion of the Hands was to the adult *Jews*, who were then Circumciſed, and not till then, with the Circumciſion of the Heart *, *Rom.* 6. 3, 4. *Act.* 22. 16. 1 *Pet.* 3. 21, *Phil.* 3. 11, 12, 13. 2. The waters of ſorrow or ſincere repentance; Contrition will cleanſe thy Conſcience; Evangelical tears will expunge theſe tinctures: No dirt will fix where theſe drops fall, witneſs *David:* Repentance will

* *See Fords pract. uſe of Infant-Baptiſ.*

will blot out theſe ſtains from thy Soul, and thy ſins alſo before God. Smite thy rocky Heart then with the Rod of God, and the Waters will guſh out: Draw Water and pour it out before God. Repentance is called the waſhing of the Heart from wickedneſs, *Ezek.* 18. 30, 31. *Jer.* 31. 18, 19. *Pſal.* 51. *Act.* 3. 19. *Exod.* 17. 6. 1 *Sam.* 7. 6. *Jer.* 4. 14. 3. The Waters of the Spirit, ſanctifying and regenerating; the Spirit is not only compared to Water, as quenching the drought of the Soul, but as cleanſing the defilements of the Soul, *Joh.* 7. 37, 38, 39. *Ezek.* 36. 25. Conſcience will continue ſinful till he comes and cleanſes; its filth is not to be waſhed off by any work of fleſh, but by the effectual work of God's Spirit: 'Tis God's Spirit muſt ſanctifie our Spirits, or we ſtick in the ſink and mud of our ſin and uncleanneſs, *Iſa.* 4. 4. *Rom.* 15. 16. 1 *Pet.* 1. 2. Reſiſt not the Spirit then, but receive thoſe influences he ſheds abroad: Liſten not to the fleſh, look within the vail of the Covenant, where God hath promiſed to put his Spirit within you; yea, and to pour out his Spirit on you, and plead his Promiſe in your Prayers, *Ezek.* 11. 19. *Iſa.* 44. 3. *Pſal.* 51. 12. & 143. 10. [3] Blood: The Bath for Conſcience is the Blood of Chriſt: Here is the Fountain opened for Sin and for Uncleanneſs; this cleanſeth from all ſin, and there is not any ſin which doth not need this cleanſing, or any power of the Soul: Both the Tabernacle and all the Veſſels of the Miniſtry were to be purged by Blood; *Moſes* ſprinkled there-

therewith both the Book and all the People. Conſider Conſcience then in any capacity, it needs this cleanſing as a Book, as a Witneſs, as a Judg, as it's the Manſion of God, and as it miniſters to and in Man, *Zach.* 13. 1. 1 *Joh.* 1. 7. *Heb.* 9. 14, 19. ——23. Sprinkle then this Blood of Jeſus upon thy Conſcience: The People were to ſprinkle the Blood with a bunch of Hyſop dipt therein, as well as the Prieſts, *Exod.* 12. 22. *Lev.* 16. 14. To note, there muſt be an Application of Chriſt's blood made by us as well as an Application made to us of this Blood by Chriſt; and thus have we our Hearts ſprinkled from an evil Conſcience, as by the Spirit on his part, ſprinkling it on us; ſo by Faith on our part, which ſprinkleth us with it: Faith is that bunch of Hyſop, which being dipt in this Blood purifieth the Heart; *Purge me with Hyſop, and I ſhall be clean*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt: *Purifying their hearts through faith*, ſaith *Peter*: *Heb.* 10. 22. 1 *Pet.* 1. 2. *Pſal.* 51. 7. *Act.* 15. 9. Believe then in the Lord Jeſus; Faith is not only effectual through the Blood of Chriſt to purge the Conſcience from the guilt of ſin, to the juſtification of thy perſon, but alſo from the filth of ſin to the Sanctification of thy Nature, *Rom.* 5. 1. *Act.* 26. 18.

4. *Behold the noted excellency of a pure Conence, and be aſſiduous:* For at (1) Mind the noted place of Conſcience, it's the upmoſt part of the Soul, next under God, and above all that is in Man: A pure Conſcience is of Angelical perfection: Purity is the Gem and Diamond in the Crown, both of the clear

and

and pure Conſcience; this renders it like the New *Hieruſalem* a City of pure Gold. (2) The noted power of this Conſcience: The pure Conſcience hath a power of converting even the baſeſt Mettals like the Philoſopher's Stone, into pure Gold; afflictions into advantages: To the pure Conſcience all things are pure; like that Perfume which the Lord preſcribeth *Moſes*, whatever they are aſunder, being tempered together they are pure and holy, 1 *Pet.* 2. 19, *&c. Tit.* 1. 15. *Exod.* 30. 35. (3) The noted price of this Conſcience: What coſt it? no leſs rate than the precious Blood of the pure and immaculate Lamb of God: What print carrieth it? no lower than the reſemblance of the pureſt Eſſence and Excellency of God. Of what preciouſneſs and pleaſance doth God account it? Of no leſs than his Habitation, his Throne, his Reſting-place, *Heb.* 9. 14. *cum* 1 *Pet.* 1. 19. 1 *Joh.* 3. 3. *Iſa.* 57. 15. (4) The noted Priviledges of this Conſcience: How great here! boldneſs in prayer, the bleſſing of peace, the beauties of God's Preſence, &c. *Heb.* 10. 22. *Phil.* 4. 7, *Pſal.* 18. 26. But how glorious hereafter! in a pure and perfect ſtate; moſt pure and beatifick ſights, *Pſal.* 24. 3, 4. *Mat.* 5. 8. But conſider this, and you cannot be careleſs: God, Glory, Chriſt, Comfort, do all ſeverally beſpeak Conſcience, as Chriſt ſometime did *Peter*, *If I waſh thee not thou haſt no part in me.* But waſh this, and thou art clean every whit, *Joh.* 13. 8, 10.

Q. 6. *How*

Q. 6. How may we preſerve our Conſcience pure?

Though I muſt remit you for fuller ſatisfaction to what hath been already ſpoken, *Chap.2. Q.6.* Yet I ſhall not refuſe to ſubjoyn ſomething more in this place.

1. *Continue at your work:* Conſcience is clean, but not all; therefore is neither all your work done for its cleanſing, till hope paſs into enjoyment, ye ought to be purifying; both the Promiſes hoped for, and the principle of hope put upon, and perſwade unto it, 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. 1 *Joh.* 3. 3. Neglect not any of the means already preſcribed you *Qu.5. Direct.3.* The ſame word and work of Faith, Hope, *&c.* which made thy Conſcience pure, will maintain its purity.

2. *Keep Conſcience to its work:* Keep it doing, and you keep it from defiling: The pure Gold never ruſts or cankers till it reſts, or is coffered up: *Paul* kept it on employment, and ſo kept it pure, 2 *Tim.*1. 3. *Act.* 24. 16. Conſcience hath its work within door, upon it ſelf, and upon the whole Soul and Spirit; and without door, upon the Senſe, and their Objects and Organs: If it reſts like a ſtanding Pool, it putrifieth and gathers ſtench: If it runs, like a living Fountain, it purifieth it ſelf and whatever is put into it.

3. *Keep Conſcience upon its watch:* Conſciſcience is the Centinel to watch over and for it ſelf, and the whole Soul beſide: Watch there-

therefore in all things. He that would be clean muſt be circumſpect: 2 *Tim.* 4. 5. *Pſal.* 119. 9. (1) Watch againſt Sinners. Theſe will be throwing forth, and throwing on of dirt: Preſs not unneceſſarily into their Society: Be not partakers with their ſin; keep thy ſelf pure: *Iſa.* 57. 20. *Epheſ.* 5. 7, 11. 1 *Tim.* 5. 22. Yea, in the very Society of the Saints, be yet ſtill upon thy Watch, looking diligently. One defection hath defiled many; and the more weak thou art, the more watchful be thou. A weak Conſcience is defiled quickly: *Heb.* 12. 15. 1 *Cor.* 8. 7. (2) Watch againſt Satan. He will be throwing in of dirt: His arrows are not only fiery to diſmay thee, but filthy to defile thee: And his principal deſign is at thy Heart, thy Conſcience, *Epheſ.* 6. 16. *Zach.* 3. 3. *cum* 1. *Act.* 5. 3. Be vigilant therefore, ſo ſhall his temptations but perplex thee, not pollute thee. Thou ſhalt not be filthed by him, but he rather ſhall flee from thee: 1 *Pet.* 5. 8, 9. *Jam.* 4. 7. (3) Watch againſt Sin: The ſin of thy Nature, this will be throwing up of dirt; and the ſin of thy life, which will be throwing on more dirt. If filthineſs be defiling, then thou canſt not ſin, and be yet ſpot-free; ſo 'tis called once and again, 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. *Jam.* 1. 21. And you muſt lay aſide all filthineſs, if you would be free; not only groſſer ſins which put out Conſcience; their ſpot is not the ſpot of his Children; But leſſer ſins, which pollute Conſcience, though not ſo eminently, as greater do. Every ſin, even the ſmalleſt, the ſecreteſt, ſtains thee ſomewhat, as

David well ſaw, and was ſenſible of, *ibid. Deut.* 32. 5. *Pſal.* 19. 12. Watch againſt every ſin then, and inducement to ſin; that thou mayſt not be ſo much as tainted with it, as well as not tanned by it, and mayſt walk in White with Chriſt's Worthies: *Rev.* 3. 4. *cum* 2. 16, 15. (4) Watch againſt this ſooty and enſnaring World. The World, as one obſerves*, is a dirty and defiling thing. The Apoſtle tells you of the pollutions of it, and corruption that is in it: And our Saviour intimates, that it is hard to continue in it, and to be kept likewiſe from the evil of it, 2 *Pet.* 2. 20. *c.* 1. 4. *Joh.* 17. 15. Follow not the World too cloſe then, leſt (if it do not daſh out thy brains, yet) it defile thy beauty. Remember what doubled cautions Chriſt hath given you here. Watch your offers from it, and all the objects of it. *Bleſſed is he that watcheth and keepeth his Garments*, Luk. 12. 15. *c.* 21. 34. *Rev.* 16. 15. Pure religion and undefiled before God, is to keep a mans ſelf unſpotted of the World; not only from being ſwilled in or ſunk by it, but from being ſpotted with it, *Jam.* 1. 27.

* *Manton on Jam.* 1. 27. Obſ. 9.

4. *Keep a watch upon Conſcience.* Your Conſciences are a apt to contract ſtains, as your Clothes are to contract ſpots. Beware what Objects it getteth neer unto, or that theſe get too near it, behold it the oftner in the Glaſs of Scriptures, and bruſh it oftner by ſelf-ſearching, and godly ſorrow to repentance; and ſo keep it with all diligence, *Prov.* 4. 23. Watch againſt that original ſin wherewith it is polluted, that it pour not out filthineſs: Watch in

the

the Objects of Senſe which are thereunto preſented, that they pour not in filthineſs. Watch that orb and ſeat, wherein it is placed. Let thy Mind be polluted, and thy Conſcience will not be long pure. Watch the offence and pett it is apt to take at preciſeneſs, and exact ſtrictneſs; Watch againſt the oppreſſing (and in fine overwhelming) diſeaſes or obliquities of Conſcience, error, ignorance, hardneſs, *&c. Heb.* 10. 22. *Tit.* 1. 15. *Act.* 24. 16. In ſhort, watch Conſcience in all thoſe offices and ſervices it is to perform; eſpecially 1. That it decline not in any of them to ſin, or from Scriptures: 2. That it double not in any ſervice but in ſingleneſs of heart do ſtill approve it ſelf. And this know, *that if thine eye be ſingle, thy whole body is full of light:* Heb. 13. 18. Epheſ. 6. 5. Mat. 6. 22. So then, *take heed to your ſelves, that your heart be not deceived:* Deut. 11. 16.

Q. 7. *What is to be done for the recovering of our Conſcience pure, when we have contracted any, eſpecially a great defilement?*

1. *Remember*; hath a deceived heart turned thee aſide? Remember this, O *Jacob*, Bring it again to mind, O ye tranſgreſſors, *Iſa.* 44. 20, 21. *c.* 46. 8. (1) Remember how it was, when thy ſelf and ſervices, like the ſhew-bread, were ſet in order before the Lord, upon the pure Table of an undefiled Conſcience; and were to him, and happily to others, of a ſweet-ſmelling odour, like the pure incenſe of ſweet ſpices. To allude to 2 *Chron.* 13. 11. *Exod.* 37.

29. Remember the felicities hereof, and whence thou art fallen, *Rev.* 3. 3. 2. 5. (2) Remember how 'tis. Thy Crown is fallen, and the moſt fine gold become as the mire in the ſtreets, *How is the faithful City become an harlot; thy ſilver is become droſs, thy wine mixt with water; and thy way before the Lord is as the uncleanneſs of a removed woman,* Iſa. 1. 21, 22. Ezek. 36. 17. (3) Remember, why and whence it is. Haſt thou not procured this unto thy ſelf? Did Conſcience ever provoke thee, that thou ſhouldſt ſo pervert its glory into ſhame, and pleaſe thy ſelf in thy own pollution? Hath corruption deſerved better from thee than Conſcience hath done? Could Satan have forced Conſcience? This ſprings from thine own free conſent. This is thy wickedneſs, and it is bitter, becauſe it reacheth unto thine heart, *Jer.* 2. 17, 33. *c.* 4. 18. 5. 25.

2. *Repent.* So God directs upon the caſe, and the godly have done accordingly as *Peter* and *David*, *Rev.* 2. 5. *c.* 3. 3. *Mat.* 26. 75. *Pſ.* 51. [*See* before *Q.6.Direct.3.*] (1) Here aggravate it upon thy Soul; rub on thy Convictions by reiterated Conſiderations, as thou wouldſt recover thy old frame of Conſcience. *My ſin is ever before me*, ſaith *David*; and then he rips up the circumſtances by which it was heightned, *Pſal.* 51. 4, *&c.* (2) When *Peter* had weighed * the circumſtances of his ſin, then he wept, and not till then, *Mar.* 14. 72. Aggravate it then from the circumſtances of this defilement; *Wo is me, I am undone, becauſe I am a man of ſuch uncleanneſs.* I that the Son gave

* ἐπιβαλὼν ἔκλαιε.

gave himſelf for to purifie; and the Spirit hath given himſelf unto, to purifie me. I that have ſuch principles from God in me for purifying, ſuch promiſes of God to me for purifying: I that ſo profeſs, ſo pray, have been ſo purged, ſo preſerved, *&c.* Aggravate it from the ſubject of this defilement. What! even my Conſcience polluted! that is to quicken and command all the other power's purity, and to keep them pure; fetch arguments from *Ch.*2. Q.5. *Direct.* 2. Oh! if the light that is in me be darkneſs, be defiled; how great is this darkneſs, this defilement! Aggravate it from the object, againſt and before whom it is; *Againſt thee, thee have I ſinned, and done this evil in thy ſight, Who art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, requireſt and rewardeſt purity, &c.* (2) Acknowledg it in Supplication: Confeſſing is neerly connexed with cleanſing: It engageth us to cleanſe in point of Credit, as well as Conſcience; and it engageth God to cleanſe in point of Covenant, and with reſpect to Chriſt, *Prov.* 28. 13. *Job* 33. 27, 28. 1 *Joh.* 1. 9. He that covers his ſin with *Adam* will never cleanſe it. Open then the filth of thy Conſcience in a free and full Confeſſion; and may every word melt into a tear. Tell him with *Job*, *Behold I am vile*; and with *Agur*, *Surely I am more brutiſh than any man, I have not the underſtanding of a man:* Prov. 28. 13. Pſal. 32. 5, 6. Job 40. 4. Prov. 30. 2. (3) Abhor thy ſelf in the ſenſe of it. A proſtrate ſelf-abhorrence will ſurely purge thy Conſcience, and blot that conſciouſneſs of ſin thou haſt contracted, both out of

God's debt-book, and thy own day-book. Whereof *Job* and *David* are plain and pregnant inſtances, *Job* 42. 6. *Pſal.* 51. This Medicament is a ſure preventive and ſafe purgative of a putrified Conſcience; it includeth theſe two (as the principal) ingredients: 1. Self-diſplicence in ſorrow and indignation with thy ſelf, as *David*; Oh! that I ſhould be ſuch a fool, ſuch a ſot, ſuch a beaſt! 2 *Cor.* 7. 11. *Pſal.* 73. 21, 22. 2. Self-defiance, in ſhaming and judging thy own ſelf, renouncing thy righteouſneſs, and ripping up thy follies and filthineſs, and loathing thy ſelf in thy own ſight. *O Lord, righteouſneſs belongeth to thee, but to me ſhame and confuſion of face: O my God, I am aſhamed, and bluſh to lift up my face, &c.* Ezek. 6. 9. *c.* 16. 63. Dan. 9. 7, 8. Ezra 9. 6.

Rev. 2. 5. 3. *Renew.* Do over the firſt works for thy former waſhing. The door of Mercy ſtands as open as heretofore. Thy duty to uſe the means and the efficacy of the means upon a due uſe of them is as obſervable, as heretofore: Then thou wert without ſtrength, and couldſt not co-operate with divine Grace, nor any more cleanſe thy ſin, than the *Ethiopian* can change his skin. In that firſt work thou wert meerly paſſive: *Rom.* 5. 6. *Jer.* 13. 23. *Job* 14. 4 *. But now the caſe is altered, the leaſt Saint is not without a little ſtrength: Grace is communicated, and doth expect thy co-operation with it ſelf, that a man purge himſelf: *Rev.* 3. 8. 2 *Tim.* 2. 21. 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. Renew then (1) the adviſed proviſion, 2. 5. *Dir.* 3. Particularly (2) the application of the Promiſes; this is not only an excellent

* See *Caryl*, ad loc.

cellent congruity, and an evident connexion between the Promiſes of Chriſt, and the purging of our Conſcience; but they exhibit a Copy how we ſhould purge, and effectually conveigh a power, whereby ye ſhall purge the Conſcience, and eſcape the corruption that is in the world through luſt: 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. 2 *Pet.* 1. 4. (3) Renew the ardour of thy Prayers; theſe will engage and ſanctifie all other endeavours; engage Heaven and thy own Heart; follow thy work cloſe here, and with much conſtancy: Double the duty, and thy diligence therein: Remember the *Pſalmiſt*, how he reiterated this Petition, *Waſh me, purge me, cleanſe me, create a clean heart in me. Waſh me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanſe me from my ſin*, Pſal. 51. 2. 7, 10. (4) Renew the Acts of theſe holy Principles in thee, Faith, Hope, and Love; as they were of paſt, ſo are they of preſent and perpetual efficacy; ſo the expreſſions intimate: *Act.* 15. 9. 1 *Joh.* 3. 3. Purifying ('tis not ſaid having purified) their Hearts by Faith. *He that hath this hope purifieth himſelf, &c.* Send Faith afreſh then to the Blood of Chriſt, and the bleſſed Covenant of Grace for cleanſing; and let this ſtir up and ſtrengthen the other implanted Habits, to their ſeveral imployments. Shew Hope a further ſight of thoſe pure and perfect Glories which God hath prepared and promiſed. The more this glorious Purity becomes the matter of thy Hope for hereafter, the more will a gracious Purity become the matter of thy at-

tempts and aſpirings here: And (to beſure) the more thou loveſt pureneſs of heart, the more wilt thou apply thy ſelf for, and ſhalt attain of heart-purity.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Of the Peaceable and Diſquiet Conſcience.

Q. 1. *Whether the Conſcience that is not Evangelically good, or pure, may yet enjoy great peace; and ſo whether a Man may ſafely conclude his Conſcience is pure, becauſe 'tis quiet and at peace?*

I. IF you underſtand peace of Conſcience in the moſt proper, preciſe and ſtrict notion thereof, then can there be no peace of Conſcience where there is no purity. 'Tis firſt pure, then peaceable; *There is no peace, ſaith my God, to the wicked.* Others may ſing a *Requiem* to them, Peace, peace; and they may bleſs themſelves in their own hearts, ſaying, I ſhall have peace; but my God ſaith, there is no peace, *Jam.* 3. 17. *Jer.* 6. 14. *Deut.* 29. 19. *Iſa.* 57. 21. The quiet of ſuch Conſciences ſome pleaſe to call a Truce; but cannot allow it the name of peace: If that here is only a temporary ſuſpenſion of arms, no total ceſſation *, the quarrel is not taken up, Conſcience is but taking more time to right it ſelf, and revenge their ſtubbornneſs. *Prop.* 1.

* See Dyk. good Conſ. p. 31, 32.

Peace of Conſcience (if we underſtand it ſtrictly) imports more than an immunity from

from inward Concertations and Concuſſions; it implieth alſo an enjoyment of it ſelf, with a victorious ſerenity in the felicitating ſmiles of God's Countenance, and in viewing the ſpoils of Sin and Satan, its vanquiſhed adverſaries, *Rom.* 15. 13. *Phil.* 4. 7. *Joh.* 14. 27. It preſuppoſeth peace with God as its prime baſis, upon which it reſts; and into which it is reſolved as its principal cauſe. Peace of Conſcience being originally but the reflex of this, that God is reconciled and at peace with us: *Rom.* 5. 1, 2. *Job* 22. 21. Men of impure Conſciences are upon terms of enmity, not of peace with God; they are againſt him, and he againſt them: *Epheſ.* 2. 16. *Pſal.* 18. 26. 2. It preſuppoſes a propriety in Chriſt, who is our Peace; whoſe death for us is the ſole price of our reconciliation and peace with God, and whoſe Union with us, and the communion with and conformity to him is the ſignal evidence thereof. But the impure Conſcience hath no intereſt in Chriſt; he is not only without Chriſt, but at war and enmity with Chriſt: *Epheſ.* 2. 14. *Rom.* 5. 1, 10. 2 *Cor.* 5. 18, 19. *Eph.* 2. 12. *Col.* 1. 21. 3. It is produced by Faith. Faith Evangelical giveth us peace with God, and God giveth us peace in and by the exerciſe of faith. Faith unites us with God in Chriſt, and ſo 'tis peace in Heaven; here is its direct act; and then Faith unfolds and reviews this Union, and ſo 'tis peace in the Heart; here is its reflex act. Now the impure Conſcience hath no ſaving Faith, which doth ſtill firſt purifie, then pacifie, the Conſcience: *Rom.* 5. 1.

c. 15.

1. 15. 13. *Epheſ.* 3. 17, 18, 19. 1 *Joh.* 5. 11, 12, 13. *Joh.* 5. 44. *Act.* 15. 9. 4. Beſides this peace is made the priviledg, the incommunicable priviledg of the Church and Kingdom of Chriſt, who are ſaid to be clean, through his word: *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, &c. i. e.* to you, not only eminently above others; but excluſively to you, and not to any others, *Rom.* 14. 17. *Joh.* 14. 27. *cum* 15. 3.

II. But if you underſtand peace of Conſcience in a larger and leſs proper ſenſe, in the vulgar notion and latitude of this expreſſion, as it imports the quietneſs thereof from inward arreſts, anguiſh, accuſations, agonies or affrights; yea, or as it implies ſome ſecurity, and ſatisfaction thereof in the preſent condition, wherein they now ſtand, there may not only be no ſting, but ſome ſuavities of Conſcience now and then; there may be, and often is, great peace of Conſcience, where there is no goodneſs, no purity of the Conſcience: The Scriptures abound with inſtances of this kind; from whence I ſhall infer, that you may have ſuch a peace of Conſcience; 1. Though you reſt in a ſtate of ſin and corruption; for ſo had *Paul* before his Converſion; Conſcience was quiet and cheery till the Commandment came; ſo had the young man, ere he converſeth with Chriſt; Conſcience doth not trouble him, ere Chriſt talketh with him, *Rom.* 7. 9. *Mat.* 19. 22. 2. Though you reſolve upon ſin againſt knowledg, and after conviction, the contumacy of the Will may ſo far muzzle the mouth of Conſcience. *Prop.* 2.

ſcience. *Judas* is reſolved upon betraying Jeſus, a crime of whoſe horrour he could not but be convinced by many and clear notices; yet till they had condemned Jeſus, Conſcience never condemneth *Judas*, *Mat.* 27.3. They reſolve to perpetuate their ſin; yet ſay in their hearts, *We ſhall have peace*, *Deut.* 29. 19. 3. Though you run on in ſins of the higheſt conſideration. They that gave themſelves over unto laſciviouſneſs, to work all uncleanneſs with greedineſs, felt no laſh of Conſcience: *Epheſ.* 4. 19. Yea, ſuch as were filled with all unrighteouſneſs, fornication, wickedneſs, covetouſneſs, maliciouſneſs, full of envy as to man, and haters of God, Covenant-breakers, *&c.* did not find the leaſt regret or remorſe of Conſcience, *Rom.* 1. 28.--------31. 4. Though you are ruſhing upon the Sword of God's Juſtice to your own confuſion, with *Balaam*, whoſe madneſs the dumb Aſs rebuked before Conſcience delivereth in the leaſt reproof, or maketh the ſmalleſt impreſſion upon him. When vindictive Juſtice hath been purſuing them to the heels, ſome there have been, that never did ſo much as put this queſtion to their hearts, What have I done? but run on with boldneſs as the Horſe ruſheth into the battel, and ſung this Syren-ſong, to their own Conſcience, *Is not the Lord among us? none evil can come upon us*: *Numb.* 22. 23, *&c.* *Jer.* 8. 6, *Mich.* 3. 11. 5. Though you may remind ever and anon what will be the ſequel and conſequence of ſuch courſes which you live in. Such accounts are either careleſly intended: He hear-

heareth the words of the Curſe, *Yet bleſſeth himſelf in his heart, ſaying, I ſhall have peace, Deut.* 29. 19. Or contumaciouſly inverted: Let us eat and drink (ſay they) for to morrow we ſhall die. If there be ſo much danger, let us make the beſt of our deck, while we may. *Art thou come to torment us before the time? Iſa.* 22. 13. *c.* 56. 12. *Mat.* 8. 29. 8. Though you are under the arreſt of ſome preſent judgment; Conſcience did not awake, nor did they conſider in their heart, no not now when their own doings had beſet them about: *Hoſ.* 7. 2. *O Lord,* (ſaith the Prophet) *thou haſt ſtricken them but they have not grieved,* Jer. 5. 3. 7. You may reckon your peace ſafeſt when perdition is ſpeedieſt: When they ſhall ſay, peace, peace; *i.e.* aſſured, abundant peace, then ſudden deſtruction, like the throws of a travailing Woman ſhall ſieze upon them, and they ſhall not eſcape: 1 *Theſ.* 5. 3. The greater their ſecurity and the more voluntary, their calamity will be the more ſudden, and without remedy: *Prov.* 29. 1. 8. In ſhort, your Conſcience may remain quiet, yet unclean, even at the approaches of death, and under the agonies of ſickneſs. *Nabal* is ſick ten days, yet Conſcience ſpeaks not any troubles or diſtreſs to him; his Heart died within him, and he became as a ſtone; ſo ſtupid was it and inſenſible, 1 *Sam.* 25. 37, 38. 9. Yea unto, and in their removal by death, in the very laſt congreſs with the King of Terrours: *Soul, take thine eaſe*; ſaith the rich man, even to the very night that his Soul was required of him. *Job* tells you,

that

that the houses of the wicked are oftimes safe (Heb. *peace*) *from fear. They spend their days in wealth or mirth, and in a moment go down to the Grave. One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet. There are no bands in their death,* (saith the Psalmist). *Dives* finds no terrours of Conscience till he falls into Hell-torments: *Luk.* 12. 18, 20. *Job* 21. 9, 13, 23. *Psal.* 73. 4. *Luk.* 16. 22, 23, 25. You may then live cheerfully, and die quietly, yet with defiled Conscience. Nor may you think that this false peace is only fallen into by the prophane world, 10. Nay Professors, and some of the highest rank and reputation have perished through this false peace, witness *Ananias* and *Sapphira*; nor may we forget *Laodicea*. The foolish Virgins who had the company, the commendation of the wise are not convinced of the want of grace, or unsoundness of their peace, till they hear the Proclamation, *Behold the Bridegroom cometh.* And now the door is shut against them: *Act.* 5. 2, *&c. Rev.* 3. 17. *Mat.* 25. 6, *&c.*

Prop. 3. III. There is no concluding then from the peace and quietness of thy Conscience to the purity and goodness of thy Conscience. For 1. there is many a peaceable or quiet Conscience, that was never pure or clean. The ignorant, the secure, the seared Conscience, as one Modern largely sheweth *. The ignorant, the unawakened, the deluded, the hardened Conscience, as another *. Nay 2. that Conscience which is least pure, least clean, is most peaceable and quiet, usually: As the seared or cauterized

* *Dyke's good Conf. p.* 24. *ad* 35.

* *Sheffield's good Conf. c.* 18. *pag.* 248. *ad* 256.

terized Conſcience, which is paſt feeling, but plunged in all manner of filthineſs: 1 *Tim.* 4. 2. *cum* 1. 3 *Epheſ.* 4. 19. Conſider 3. Peace of Conſcience is no mark of a pious Chriſtian ſingly and of it ſelf; nor do we find it ſimply inſiſted upon by them as ſuch. I never find any Saint in the whole Scripture pleading it as the ſignal evidence, much leſs as the ſole evidence of his juſtification and change from death to life. When they would clear their being in and bleſſedneſs by Chriſt, they do not attempt the proof of it by their peaceable and quiet enjoyments of themſelves, or of him, but by their pious intercourſe with and conformity to him, in the crucifying of their ſins, and quickning of their Souls: *Rom.* 8, 1, 2, *&c.* 1 *Joh.* 2. 3, *&c. c.* 3. 19, *&c. Paul's* rejoycing was the teſtimony of his Conſcience, *That in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity* (not that in ſerenity and grateful ſuavities) *he had had his converſation in Chriſt*, 2 Cor. 1. 12. 4. A polluted Conſcience may enjoy more peace, (ſuch as it is) than doth many a pure Conſcience. What taſts have many ſuch of the Heavenly gift, and of the good Word of God; yea, and of the Powers of the World to come, who yet have not arrived to the things that accompany Salvation? Whereas, others are chaſtened every morning, have ſorrow in their heart daily: For peace have great bitterneſs, and are afflicted from their youth up: *Heb.* 6. 4, 5. *cum* 9. *Pſal.* 73. 14. *&* *Pſal.* 13. 2. *Iſa.* 38. 17. *Pſal.* 88. 15.

IV. Iff

Prop. 4. IV. If you would conclude the goodneſs of your Conſcience, you ſhould rather argue forward from purity to peace, than backward from peace to purity: Begin firſt at the Kingdom of God, *which is firſt righteouſneſs, than peace*; as the wiſdom which is from above, *is firſt pure, than peaceable*: Mat. 6. 33. Rom. 14. 17. Jam. 3. 17. Remember 1. It is purity of Conſcience is the principle of peace of Conſcience, I mean of ſound and ſaving peace. This excellent reſt is the effect of righteouſneſs; Peace followeth Grace in all the Apoſtolical Salutations, and floweth from it; *To be ſpiritually-minded is life and peace: Iſa.* 32. 17. *Rom.* 1. 7. *c.* 8. 6. 2. Peace is but a priviledg, and a ſeparable priviledg of purity and grace: So that it is neither proper nor prudent to prove grace by peace. Into what a labyrinth of perplexing and amazing fears may you involve your ſelves, while you limit your arguments, and proceed by peace! Eſpecially, there being ſo many evidences of much grace, where there was no peace, in *Job*, *David*, *Heman*, and others. 3. Your peace will never prove your purity, ſimply and by it ſelf. There is that nearneſs and ſimilitude between the falſe and ſophiſticated peace of ſinners, on the one hand, and the ſound and ſaving peace of Saints on the other hand, if they are materially conſidered. Doth this Saint feel no ſting of Conſcience? neither doth that Sinner. Hath this Saint ſuavities of Conſcience? ſo that Sinner. You muſt proceed further therefore in your Enquiries. Doth my peace reſult from the enjoy-

enjoyment of my ſelf in the God of Peace, as my ſupream end and ſoveraign good? from the enervating of Sin and Satan, the grand enemies of Peace, which war againſt my Soul? From the entire ſubjection of my whole Man to the Prince of Peace, in my quiet and chearful compliance with his Government, *&c.* Theſe things prove indeed the truth of your Peace; but they take in Grace with it, and are but an intermediate proof of your Peace; *viz.* as they are the immediate effects and evidence of your Grace. 4. Prove your Purity, and it will prove your Peace then. If the Lord Jeſus be a King of Righteouſneſs to you, he will be after that a King of Peace alſo: *Heb.* 7. 2. But truth is, peace of Conſcience without purity is both defiling; *Unto them that are defiled is nothing pure*; yea and damning; it accelerateth Mens deſtruction. Though falſe peace like thoſe Locuſts in the Revelation hath the appearance of Evangelical Peace as they had the Faces of Men; yet their power is, like theirs, only to hurt Men, who do the more irreclaimedly thereby go on in ſin, like the Ox to the ſlaughter, not knowing that it is for their life, till the dart ſtrike thorough their liver, and they are inextricably involved in the ſnare of death and deſtruction: *Tit.* 1. 15. 1 *Theſ.* 5. 3. *Rev.* 9. 7, 10. *Prov.* 7. 22, 23.

Q. 2. *Whence, or from what Causes is it, that the false Peace of Conscience ariseth, that we may avoid such fearful pits and quick-sands?*

*See *Shepherd. sinc. Conv. pag* 113. *ad* 142.

The Causes are many without, within the Conscience *.

I. Without the Conscience; as,

1. The Devil, who to promote his designs, and preserve his Dominion, cheateth Souls into and keeps them in this false peace; beguiling them with his artifices, and guarding them against foreign impressions with his arms. And no marvel, for it is his interest, to keep all here in quietness. When the strong man armed keeps the Palace, all his goods are in peace: 2 *Cor.* 11, 3. *Luk.* 11. 21. He binds carnal persons in his Chains, and being his Captives, Conscience it self is much-what at his command and pleasure: 2 *Tim.* 2. 25, 26. *Ephes.* 2. 2. He blazons the case, if Conscience takes distaste at any time, and overlays it with his paint and colours, varnishing over our unrighteousness with other appearances, according to his deceitful arts. Doth *Eve* startle at his suggestion? We may not do it lest we die. *Nay*, saith he, *ye shall not surely die:* Ye shall live the sublimest life, ye shall be as Gods: 2 *Thess.* 2. 9, 19. *Gen.* 3. 4, 5. He blinds the Conscience, and bars up the doors and windows of the Soul against the light of knowledg, lest his deeds, and our dismall state should be discovered, as well perceiving, what a manifestation of us to our selves this would soon make?

make? 2 *Cor.* 4. 4. *Joh.* 3, 20. *Epheſ.* 5. 13. He baffleth Convictions, if at any time they begin upon the Conſcience, and begets a diſbelief of the divine threatnings. God hath ſaid, *Ye ſhall not eat of it leſt ye die*, ſaith *Eves* Conſcience. *No*, ſaith Satan, *God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, your eyes ſhall be opened, &c.* God pronounceth the furies of War to *Ahab*, and his fall in and by it. Satan perſwadeth him there is no ſuch matter; but he ſhall reap peace, and victory: *Gen.* 3. 3, 4, 5. 1 *King.* 22. 22. He bears off commotions, whatſoever may diſturb the quiet and peace of Conſcience, which he uſeth as his Quarters and Palace. If a ſpark of Conviction be let fall in a ſickneſs, or ſome other ſtrait, he hath his earth to ſmother and ſtifle it, or his water to cool and quench it. If any ſeed ſhall be dropt at a Sermon, he like the fowls of the air cometh and catcheth away that which was ſown in the heart: *Luk.* 11. 21. *Mat.* 13. 19. He bribes the Conſcience if it be at any time clamorous, or is prone to quarrel. Sometimes with the divertiſements of ſinful or ſenſual pleaſures, that the noiſe of theſe may out-voice, and their muſick charm the Conſcience. Sometimes with the devotions of a ſtricter profeſſion. The drunken rounds and debaucheries of riot will no longer quiet, but rather cut and wound the Conſcience. He is content that *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, and *Simon Magus* ſhall change their company and work too, as *Judas* did, ſo they cleave to him as their Maſter. He knoweth how to put on the appearance of

an Angel of Light. Sometimes by the delicious ſweets of a promiſe, which he either halves, or otherwiſe abuſeth. The heart, happily, is at no peace, for lack of a promiſe. The babe muſt have the breaſt. Satan, who ever attends his advantage, can transform himſelf into a miniſter of righteouſneſs; and draws out the breaſt of the Promiſe, as he did unto Chriſt; *He ſhall give his Angels charge concerning thee.* But he omits the principal part of it, and with a purpoſe of overthrowing him by the ſecurity of the Promiſe, when he could not overcome by the ſword and ſpear of his power: *Epheſ.* 2. 2, 3. 2 *Pet.* 2. 19. *Act.* 5. & 8. 2 *Cor.* 11. 14, 15. *c.* 2. 11. *Mat.* 4. 6. *cum Pſal.* 91. 11. Well then, beware of Satan; you have ſeen his arts, be not enſnared by them. Be not ignorant of his devices. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to ſtand againſt all the wiles of the Devil. If he drives on peace, he deſigns your perdition by it. Be ſure his peace is with the extremeſt drudgery of the exceedingſt danger, and will ſurely end in damnation; 2 *Cor.* 2. 11. *Epheſ.* 6. 11. 2 *Theſ.* 2. 9. ——13.

2. Daubing Prieſts, and Dough-baked Profeſſors, which ſay, *Peace, peace, and there is no peace.* The overflowing ſhowers of Divine diſpleaſure will conſume both theſe and them together, the deceived and deceivers: *Ezek.* 13. 10,——16. Jer. 6. 14. Some there are, who can or will ſee nothing but Viſions of peace for their people; leſt when they denounce War from Heaven againſt others, they ſhould hear the

the eccho and reflex thereof in their own hearts; or others ſhould be ready to recrimi-nate, *Phyſitian heal thy ſelf: Ezek.* 13. 16, *&c. Luk.* 4. 23. Others it may be will be ſoothing you up in a falſe peace, though you walk in the imagination of your own hearts, amongſt fire-balls and deaths; and will be promiſing you life, while you perſiſt in your luſts. A fearful and horrible thing, if God himſelf may be witneſs: *Jer.* 23. 14, 17. *Ezek.* 13. 22. Others will be ſmoothing and ſalving up the matter, upon the leaſt pain or prick of Conſcience. *Theſe heal the hurt of the daughter of my people ſlightly*, ſaith the Lord. They ſkin over the ſores of their fond and fooliſh Patients, without ſearching or probing them, or drawing out the putrid matter and core which is at the bottom of them; that addeth to their peril, and will augment their future pain. They are healing their Souls, while they ſhould be hewing at their ſins, and laying the ax at the very root. For this God will ſurely and ſeverely viſit: *Jer.* 6. 14, 15. *c.* 8. 11, 12. *Hoſ.* 6. 5, 9. Take heed then, and turn thine ear, eſpecially thy heart from all ſuch; for they ſpeak a Viſion of their own heart. They ſee vain and fooliſh things for thee, not diſcovering thine iniquity. One *Micajah*, though he ſound the Trumpet of War againſt thy ſins, would be more proſperouſly attended, and peaceably accompanied, than four hundred falſe Prophets, that will ſing a *requiem* to thy Soul, while thou remaineſt in thy ſinful ſtate: *Jer.* 23. 16, 17. *Lam.* 2. 14. 1 *King.* 22. 6, *&c.*

3. Divine Justice is another cause, which giveth men over to such strong delusions, blinding the eyes and hardening the heart, &c. of such obdurate sinners: 2 *Thes.* 2. 11. *Joh.* 12. 40. Only remember, he is rather a deficient, then an efficient cause. For he cannot be the author (to speak properly) of what he is the avenger. He doth not give in this peace, but by with-drawing his grace, he giveth up men for their sin to sink in, and giveth them over to sit down in this false peace: *Rom.* 1. 24, 26, 28. But be it remembred also, that he giveth not up any judicially, who give not up themselves actually and voluntarily. So that here your great care and concern is, that you provoke not justice hereunto by your own self-pleasedness and stubborn perverseness. Hearken to him, and you are assured that you shall dwell safely, and be quiet from the fear of so great an evil: *Psal.* 81. 11, 12. *Rom. ibid. Prov.* 1. 30. *ad finem.*

II. Within the Conscience. This false peace ariseth, either from the vicious qualities, or from the vicious carriage of the Conscience.

1. The vicious qualities of the Conscience are many: I shall mind you of these six only, from whence it taketh its spring and rise. As (1) from its sottishness or ignorance; either of the God of Peace, and the purity of his nature, or of the peace of God, and its pure and powerful effects upon our natures. Or of what the Scriptures demand, as antecedaneous, or in order to sound peace, or of what them-

themſelves are or do, in obſervance and obedience of the terms of peace: *Pſal.* 50. 20. *Eph.* 4. 18. *Rom.* 1. 21. c. 7. 9. *Zeph.* 1. 12. (2) From its ſenſuality and enſlavedneſs to the ſenſual appetite, and thoſe ſecular objects which it affects. When the brutiſh appetite, through mens lazineſs or liſtleſneſs, once supercedes and commands the rational, a cheap liberty will content the Conſcience, which now lies captivated in its chains. Now God's judgments are far above out of his ſight. And while ſenſe and fancy have their fill, Conſcience is eaſily flattered, and he ſaith in his heart, *I ſhall never be moved.* Soul take thine eaſe, ſaith he. Why ſhouldſt thou feed upon gall and hemlock, who haſt goods laid up for many years? *Pſal.* 10. 5, 6. *Luk.* 12. 19. (3) From its ſupineſs and ſelf-indulgence, whereby men take it for granted, that their eſtate is good enough already, eſpecially if there be the *Imprimatur* of any eminent Profeſſor, and therefore think it a needleſs and ſupererogatory piece to undertake ſuch a ſowre and ſelf-diſpleaſing work, as to put their condition upon ſuch ſevere inquiries, and ſo ſtrict an inquiſition as their Preachers would perſwade to. Whence it is, that the commands are ſo much iterated and ingeminated for examining our ſelves, conſidering our ways, *&c. Jer.* 5. 24. 2 *Cor.* 13. 5. *Hag.* 1. 5, 7. *Gal.* 6. 4. (4) From its ſleepineſs and inanimadvertency. Happily the notion and neceſſity of ſelf-examining ſticks upon men, after a Sermon, or in a Sickneſs. But 'tis not ſo powerfully and prevailingly, as to put them

upon the work presently. But εἰς ἕτερον τὸν σπουδαῖον, *they dismiss so difficult a work till another, and then another season.* It's requisite, they have yet a little more sleep, a little more slumber. And God hearkens and hears, and there is not so much as a question put to their hearts. Well, happily he renews his calls, and repeats his knocks by some smarter providence, or severer preaching; and yet through a sleepy deadness, Conscience is prone to reply as he did in the Gospel, *Trouble me not, the door is now shut, and my children are in bed with me, I cannot yet rise and give thee:* Eph. 5. 14. Jer. 8. 6. Luk. 11. 7. (5) From its seardness and insensibleness, whereby the awakening woes and alarums of wrath, which are sounded in his word, and resounded in his works, make no impression upon it, or upon the affections. A small prick is soon sensed by a sound part; but pierce, press, cut, knock, &c. a seared part, and there is no sense of pain. This Conscience is seared, as with an hot iron, it is past feeling. Let the two-edged Sword be bathing it self in blood and slaughter; let it be dividing asunder of Soul and Spirit; and dissecting even to the joints and marrow of him, that sits with him in the same seat; yet this seared Conscience neither feels nor fears it. Nay though his own doings have beset him round about, he will neither say to his heart, nor suffer his heart to speak to him, in what an estate he standeth: 1 *Tim.* 4. 2. *Eph.* 4. 19. *Hos.* 7. 2. *Mal.* 2. 2. (6) From its stubbornness and indurateness; whereby

it

it will not be beaten out, nor brought off, its old cuſtomary pretenſions for peace, and quiet ſelf-poſſeſſion. Could we flaſh in ſome of the eternal flames, and open the horrors of Death and Hell; yet through the power of ſuch pre-poſſeſſions of his own Salvation, like the Horſe (in *Job*), *he goeth on to meet the armed men, he mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted, neither turneth he his back from the ſword, &c.* And is ready to ſay with thoſe (in *Iſaiah*), *We have made a Covenant with death, and with hell are we at an agreement.* He acknowledgeth God hath curſed ſuch ſins; yet bleſſeth himſelf in his own heart: *Job* 39. 21, 22. *Iſa.* 28. 15. *Deut.* 29. 19,

2. The vicious carriage of Conſcience, in, and upon the trial of our eſtates, is the principal fountain of this falſe Peace. None of the Cauſes without the Conſcience can prejudice you, unleſs there be a part-taking by Conſcience within you. In vain doth Satan force, or his Diſciples flatter, till Conſcience falls in with them, and ſpeaks that falſe peace, to which theſe ſeduce you. And therefore the Scriptures reſolve it into this, as the next cauſe; If he bleſs himſelf in his heart, ſaying, *I ſhall have peace.* When they ſhall ſay, *Peace, peace: Deut.* 29. 19. 1 *Theſ.* 5.3. Now if Conſcience upon the proceſs or trial of your eſtates, doth ſpeak a falſe or vicious peace, it is ever in or by ſome fallacious procedure in the caſe. παραλογιζόμενοι, *Deceiving their own ſelves.* It puts a fallacious argument, or paralogiſm upon us. Conſcience always comes to a concluſi-

on

on of our eſtate, and ſo of our peace, (as you have ſeen already) by ſome practical Syllogiſm. If our peace be falſe, its procedure is fallacious, in one part ſtill, or other of this practical Syllogiſm, wherein it doth impoſe upon us, or is impoſed upon.

1. Sometimes it is out in the Propoſition, as it taketh and tendereth us, a falſe mark or rule to try our eſtates by. Thus were they deceived, *Jam.* 1. 22. *Mat.* 7. 22, 23. *Luk.* 13. 26, 27. The aſſumption was true (and in this they atteſt God himſelf), *Lord, Lord, we have propheſied in thy name; we have eat and drunk in thy preſence; we have been hearers of thy Word, &c.* But the Propoſition was falſe, (which is therewith included), All thoſe that have propheſied in thy name, have eat and drunk in thy preſence, have been hearers of thy Word, ſhall be ſaved and eternally happy. This was a falſe Propoſition; and hereby they fell into that falſe peace, concluding themſelves in a ſaving condition, from an unſound and falſe *medium*, which could not bear the weight of ſuch a Concluſion.

2. Sometimes it is out in the Aſſumption, as it tenders a falſe teſtimony or report, of what we are and do in the trial of our eſtates. Thus were they deceived, *Jer.* 2. 35. *Becauſe I am innocent, ſurely his anger ſhall turn from me.* The Propoſition implied was true, [*viz. Gods anger ſhall turn away from all ſuch as are innocent.*] But the Aſſumption, *viz.* [*I am innocent,*] was falſe. *Behold, I will plead with thee, ſaith the Lord, becauſe thou ſayeſt, I have not ſinned,* ibid. & v. 23, *&c. How canſt thou*

ſay,

ſay, I am not polluted, I have not gone after Baalim: See thy way in the Valley, know what thou haſt done, &c. Thus, 1 *Joh.* 1. 8. ſaith the Apoſtle, *If we ſay we have no ſin, we deceive our ſelves, and the truth is not in us.* Conſcience in giving ſuch falſe evidence doth but put a cheat upon us, a lie upon God (*ver.* 10.) and proclaims us aliens from the truth of Grace, and of the Goſpel.

3. Sometimes Conſcience is out in the Concluſion. Sometimes (1) Men ſuſpend the Concluſion, as did thoſe, *Rom.* 1. 32. *Who knowing the judgment of God, that they who commit ſuch things are worthy of death, not only do the ſame, but have pleaſure in them that do them.* Conſcience dealt fairly with them, as to the two firſt Propoſitions, [viz. *They that do ſuch things are worthy of death; But we do ſuch things.*] But as to the Concluſion how fallacioufly! Not only hiding and with-holding the ſentence or concluſion from them, that would regularly have followed upon thoſe premiſſes; But indulging them a ſinful Complacence in their Society, who did them. (2) Sometimes we ſhuffle in another, a falſe Concluſion, which the Premiſſes will not admit, and are alien from. So *Deut.* 29. 19. *And it cometh to paſs, when he heareth the words of this Curſe, that he bleſſeth himſelf in his heart, ſaying, I ſhall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenneſs to thirſt.* Conſcience ſeems clear in the Propoſition, [There is no bleſſing but a curſe for them, that walk in their own luſts and imaginations.] And to confeſs the

the Aſſumption, [But I walk in the luſts and imagination of mine own heart.] Yet is it ſo far from concluding againſt his bleſſedneſs and peace, which ſhould be the genuine reſult from thoſe Premiſſes that ſhe concludeth for it, and foyſteth in another Concluſion in this Soul's caſe, [I ſhall have peace though I walk in theſe imaginations of mine heart.] How ordinary is it, that men thus ſhuffle and turn off the ſevere paſſages of Sermons and Scriptures from themſelves to the ſentence of others! when as ever they would avoid the Curſe, *they ſhould lay it to their own hearts*: Mal. 2. 2. Sometimes (3) Men ſhift off the Concluſion, that if Conſcience will not ſuſpend the true, nor ſhuffle in a falſe ſentence; yet ſhe muſt ſpeak it ſo ſoftly, and the Application be ſo eaſie, as it may not ſtick nor abide upon them. Conſcience concludeth the *Jews* condition upon them, and quickeneth them to a return to him, that ſmote them. But the cogency thereof is ſoon off, there was no ſetled impreſſion. Their heart was not right with him. *Neither were they ſtedfaſt in his Covenant*: *Pſal.* 78. 34.----38. Well then, as ever you would avoid the fearful precipices of a falſe peace, watch Conſcience in all its proceeds and parts; and in the diſcuſſion of thy eſtate, uſe thy utmoſt diligence, and moſt univerſal obſervance. Of which in the next Queſtion.

Q. 3.

Qu. 3. *How may or ſhould a Chriſtian ſo purſue the trial of his Eſtate in his own Conſcience as to prevent the cheat of a falſe Peace?*

A falſe peace, principally ariſing out of the fallacious procedure of Conſcience, either in the Propoſition, Aſſumption or Concluſion; therefore in this purſuit, or trial of your eſtates, you ſhould ſtrictly attend and aſſure Conſcience throughout all theſe parts.

Direct. 1. As touching the Propoſition, wherein Conſcience delivereth ſome truth, as a rule or mark to try your eſtate by. I adviſe (1) That you try ſuch marks by Scriptures. 'Tis no imputation, either to the juſtice or prudence of a Magiſtrate, to try the ſeveral meaſures by the ſtandard of the Market. *Paul* and *Silas* preached by an infallible Direction; yet the *Berean* providence of bringing their Sermons to the teſt of Scriptures, ſearching the Scriptures daily, whether thoſe things were ſo, is commended as noble and generous, *Act.* 17. 11. Believe not every ſpirit, every ſign that is or may be ſuggeſted; but ſearch the Scriptures, as our Saviour beſpeaks thee, whether they be marks, and what marks (or of what) they ſo be: 1 *Joh.* 4. 1. *Joh.* 5. 39.

Try whether it be a mark that Conſcience tenders thee for this trial. Is ſhe not raviſht with a ſtrange woman, and imbraceth the boſom of a ſtranger? Happily thou counteſt thoſe

those things marks, which thou shouldst rather call thy mistakes. *If a man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself*, Gal. 6. 3. He may and shall deceive his own heart, that deduceth his arguments but from the semblances and appearances of Religion. But he that argueth from the inseperable properties of Religion, puts himself thereby beyond that peril of a self-deception: *Jam.* 1.26. Bring the sign or mark then thou wouldst try thy estate by, to the scales and touch-stone of the Scriptures. Press Conscience to answer these three Questions. 1. Is this mark found upon all that are in the state of Salvation? Because the particular guises and affections of some individual persons are found upon me, I cannot thence prove, that I am a Man; if I would cogently argue it, I must evince it from such affections as are common to the whole kind. 'Tis as great an impotence and oversight to conclude my peace and salvation, from communicating in the characters of some particular Christians. My enquiries should be rather after such Characters as do agree to all that are indeed and throughout Christians. They urge perhaps from the singular examples of some saved ones, as if they had obtained some signal evidence for Heaven having arrived to that height, unto which but few did attain: *Mat.* 7. 22. *Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out Devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?* But our Saviour neither admits the plea, nor accepts the persons, *ver.* 23. And teach-

eth

eth us to fetch our Evidences, not from the ſingular priviledges of ſome numerical Saints, but from that ſpirit of obedience which runs through the veins of all Saints, and is inſeparable from any that are ſaved, *ver.* 21. The Propoſition had need be univerſal. As, *Peace be to all them that are in Chriſt Jeſus. By him all that believe are juſtified. Whoſoever believeth in him ſhall not periſh, but have everlaſting life, &c.* 1 Pet. 5. 14. Act. 13. 39. Joh. 3. 15, 16. 2. Is this mark found only upon ſuch as are in an eſtate of Salvation? I cannot prove that this is a Man from any ſuch part or principle as is common to a brute with him. My proofs muſt pitch upon what is proper to Mankind. He is a Rational Creature, therefore a Man. For Man only is that Creature upon Earth, which is endowed with Reaſon. It would be as great a weakneſs to argue my title to Heaven from any ſuch qualifications as are common even to them that ſhall be thruſt into Hell. The Apoſtle therefore noteth it as a vain and empty crack in thoſe ſolifidians, *Jam.* 2. 14, *&c.* that they inſiſted barely upon believing, and thence infer'd their Bleſſedneſs and Salvation; whereas the Devils might put in a claim upon this account, to the Heavenly Kingdom as well, if not more than they, if a faith without works might be admitted for an evidence. *For the Devils alſo believe and tremble*, ver. 19. Though *Paul* ſpake with tongues more than they all, who took thoſe and other ſuch gifts as evidences of Salvation: yet he thinks fit to tell them, *Though I ſpeak with the tongues of men and of angels,*

though

though I have the gift of Propheſie, and underſtand all myſteries, and all knowledg, and though I have all faith, ſo that I could remove mountains, and have no charity, (the diſcriminating character of the devout and thorough Chriſtian) *I am nothing*, 1 Cor. 14. 18. *c.* 13. 1, 2. So then, the mark which Conſcience ſingleth out to diſcuſs and determine your eſtate by, muſt be proper to, and which is alone predicable of, the ſincere and ſaved ones of God. Not ſuch a diſpoſition wherein hypocrites may partake with you. It was by this *Job* defended his Integrity, and defeated the accuſations of his enemies. *Will the hypocrite delight himſelf in the Almighty? Will he always call upon God?* And our Saviour's queſtion will be, *What do you more than others? Do not even the Publicans the ſame?* And he ſtrictly concludeth, *Except your righteouſneſs ſhall exceed the righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees, ye ſhall in no caſe enter into the Kingdom of Heaven:* Job 27.6.----11. Mat. 5. 46, 47. & 20. 3. Is this mark convertible? *i.e.* Are all they upon whom this mark is found in a ſaving eſtate? And have all that are in a ſaving eſtate, this mark found upon them? Right Properties are reciprocally predicable of the Subjects, whoſe Properties they are. All that are ſaved are hearers of the Word. But all that are hearers of the Word are not ſaved. This they did deliberate, and ſo deceived themſelves: *Jam.* 1. 22. *See then that you be doers of the word, and not hearers only.* All they that are ſuch ſhall be ſaved; and all that ſhall be ſaved are ſuch: *Rom.* 2. 13.

Luk.

Luk. 11. 28. Whoſoever are in a ſtate of Salvation do profeſs ſpecial dearneſs to, and devotion for the Lord and Saviour. But whoſoever profeſs this are not therefore in a ſtate of Salvation. This they did not attend, and ſo abuſed themſelves: *Mat.* 7. 21, 22, 23. *Luk.* 13. 24.----28. The propriety between Chriſt and the Church is mutual. *My beloved is mine, and I am his.* The promiſe is mutual, *I will ſay, thou art my people; and they ſhall ſay, thou art my God: Cant.* 2. 16. *Hoſ.* 2. 23. See that the Propoſition upon which you proceed, will be ſuch too, that the terms will reciprocate. As the righteouſneſs of God, which is by faith of Jeſus Chriſt, is unto all, and upon all them that believe. And all that believe are intereſted in this righteouſneſs. *The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him in truth.* And all they that call upon him in truth, are nigh unto the Lord: *Rom.* 3. 22. *Pſal.* 145. 18. Would you but improve theſe rules, in and for the trial of thoſe marks, in the review of which you are to make trial of your eſtates; the deceitful evidences, whereby multitudes undo themſelves, would ſoon diſappear, and no more ſtand before the diſcuſſion of Conſcience than the duſt, which is eaſily driven before the wind.

2. Treaſure up theſe marks in order to the trial of thy ſelf. Make Conſcience the ſacred Repoſitory of ſuch marks and rules. Or if Memory be this Cloſet and Repoſitory, let Conſcience be ſure to keep the Key. Beſides the advantages which thou ſhalt hereby reap, for a ſolemn ſelf-examination; they will ſuggeſt

matter of self-reflection, and inward self-converses, in the several lines and periods of thy Secular Negotiations. *Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tye them about thy neck: When thou goest it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest it shall talk with thee. For the Commandment is a lamp, and the Law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life*, Prov. 6. 21, 22, 23.

3. Take forth what marks thou hast treasured up for trial, *That as a Scribe instructed to the Kingdom of God, thou mayst bring forth out of thy treasure things both new and old*, Mat. 13. 52. There are three sorts of Marks mentioned by Divines *. 1. Exclusive; the absence of which doth plainly speak that we are not as yet in a state of Grace and Salvation. 2. Inclusive; the presence of which doth not only prove the truth of our Grace, or being in the state of Salvation, but our growth in Grace and progress in Sanctification. 3. Beside those, there are a middle sort of Marks which they call positive. The presence of which doth positively and plainly shew, the being or integrity of our Graces, the truth of our Sanctification, and that we are in a state of Salvation. Touching these I shall offer you some rules, in the case before you. 1. Do not decline Exclusive Marks, which have their end, and are of efficacy to undeceive and convince of infidelity and hypocrisie. That a man deceive not his own heart, there is use of the Exclusive Mark: *Jam.* 1. 26. *He that seems to be religious and bridleth not his tongue, this mans religion is vain*;

* See Manton on James.

vain; as well as of that more evidential and poſitive, *ver.* 27. Prayer and other acts of Worſhip will not prove you in a ſtate ſaving; but if you caſt off Worſhip, and reſtrain Prayer before God, it will prove you in a ſtate of ſin. Hearing his truths will not prove the acceptation of your perſons by God; But if you turn away your ear from hearing the Law, it will prove that your prayers are an abomination: *Iſa.* 1. 15. *Job* 15. 4. *Jam.* 1. 22. *Prov.* 28. 9. 2. Do not dwell upon Excluſive Marks, much leſs ſhouldſt thou draw them down to the ends and uſes of ſuch as are poſitive; as if reading and hearing Sermons, receiving Sacraments, *&c.* would ſpeak thee to be in a ſaving ſtate. For, as they are unable to do this, ſo thou wilt hereby but deceive thy own ſelf; whereof you have already ſeen ſeveral inſtances. 3. Draw forth and improve thy poſitive Marks; which I ſuppoſe thee to have tried and treaſured up according to the two former Directions. Now is the time to bring them forth out of thy armory; when thou art in hazard of thy life, and thy heart lyeth open to all the aſſaults, which either the policies or power of Sin and Satan can bring on againſt thee, to captivate, or enſnare thee. The Apoſtle therefore directs them now to produce faith and fellowſhip with Chriſt, when they are upon proving and examining themſelves, and to aſcertain their eſtates. And now it is, that *Job* and *David* awaken their memories to recall, and do apply ſuch Marks to themſelves, when they are about clearing

their caſe before God, and in their own Conſcience: *Job* 23. 10, 11, 12. *Pſal.* 26. 1, 2, 3. 4. Draw forth thy poſitive Marks for a full and final deciſion in what eſtate thou art, or for poſitive ends: That thou leave not thy eſtate at an hovering uncertainty, in looſe conjectures, or languiſhing probabilities, but bring it to a clear and certain iſſue, in thy own Conſcience, and ſo aſſure thy heart before God: 1 *Joh.* 3. 19. And indeed, why have you ſuch poſitive Marks afforded on God's part, but to this end? or how can you anſwer ſo many obligations as are plainly required on your part, that cannot be performed without the previous knowledg of your eſtate? 1 *Joh.* 5. 13, 20. 2 *Cor.* 13. 5. *Prov.* 22. 21. The Primitive Chriſtians therefore would not ſuffer themſelves to ſit down in opinionative gueſſes, or hopeful conjectures only, but purſued their Marks to a peremptory, but modeſt knowledg of what condition they were in. *Hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his Commandments. Hereby know we, that we are in him. We know that we have paſſed from death to life, becauſe we love the Brethren, &c.* 1 Joh. 2. 3, 5. *c.* 3. 14, 19, 24. *c.* 5. 19.

Direct. 2. Touching the Aſſumption, wherein Conſcience delivereth her teſtimony and report, in the management of this ſelf-trial, how 'tis with us as to matter of fact, with reference to the matter of law or rule, contained in the former Propoſition. Here I adviſe,

(1.) Let Conſcience diſcuſs the truth thereof before ſhe determines on her teſtimony. The

Pſal-

Pſalmiſt reflects and revolves the caſe upon his thoughts ere Conſcience ſhall make report. Nor will he adventure to determine without a diligent ſelf-diſcuſſion, *I commune with my own heart, and my ſpirit made diligent ſearch.* And ſurely 'tis no leſs our duty than his, whoſe danger as being leſs fallible, is far more: *Pſal.* 76. 6. & 4. 4. 2 *Pet.* 1. 10. *Heb.* 6. 11. *Laodicea* might eaſily have diſproved that falſe teſtimony, *Thou ſayeſt I am rich and encreaſed with goods, and have need of nothing.* If ſhe had but diſcuſſed it firſt in her own thoughts, but being careleſs in this, *ſhe knew not that ſhe was miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked,* *Rev.* 3. 17. The *Jews* ſay, *Joh.* 8. 41. *We have one Father, even God.* Our Saviour returns the ſpeech to a further ſearch of Conſcience, which might eaſily correct ſuch a miſtake and miſreport as this, *Nay, if God were your Father, ye would love me, for I proceeded forth and came from God, &c.* ver. 42, 44, 45. The like he doth, *ver.* 33, 34, 39, 40. We were never in bondage ſay they, we are *Abraham*'s ſeed, and he is our father; and no doubt they ſpake according to the ſuffrage of their Conſcience. But he remits it to ſecond and more ſerious conſiderations. *Whoſoever committeth ſin is the ſervant of ſin. If ye be Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But ye ſeek to kill me, &c. this did not Abraham.* 'Tis requiſite then that you return the teſtimony once and again to a further reflection and review of Conſcience. Sometimes 1. the calling back of Circumſtances may confute the vanity and falſhood of

ſuch a Teſtimony. Would *Babylon* have ſaid, *I ſhall be a Lady for ever*, if ſhe had laid theſe things to heart? *Iſa.* 47. 6,7. Or thoſe in *Mich.* 3. 11. *Is not the Lord among us? none evil can come upon us*; if they had but looked backwards and lain hold upon the circumſtances of their diſobedience? *ver.*9.10. 2. Sometimes the calling in of ſenſe; as *Jer.* 2. 23. *How canſt thou ſay I am not polluted, I have not gone after Baalim? See thy way in the Valley, &c.* 3. Moſt times the calling over and conſulting with Scriptures, which pierce like a two-edged ſword, *even to the dividing aſunder of ſoul and ſpirit, and is a diſcerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, and maketh manifeſt the ſecrets thereof to it ſelf*, unto a ſound Conviction, *Heb.* 4. 12. 1 *Cor.* 14. 24, 25. 4. But would we carry on the converſe in our own Conſcience, we ſhould not ordinarily fail of the effect, either in clearing and confirming the truth, or confuting the falſhood, of what our Conſcience witneſſeth. Doth Conſcience ſay, They that have fellowſhip with God are in an happy ſtate. But we have fellowſhip with God? Put her to the proof of the Aſſumption in a ſecond practical Syllogiſm; as thus, *They that have fellowſhip with God walk in the light*, (i.e. *live holily*) *for God is light, and in him is no darkneſs at all. But we walk in the light*, (i.e. *live holy and uprightly.*) This confirms. Or on the other hand thus, *They that walk in darkneſs* (i.e. *that are ignorant and diſobedient*), *have no fellowſhip with God.* But we walk in darkneſs. This confuteth. *If we*

ſay

ſay that we have fellowſhip with him, and walk in darkneſs, we lie and do not the truth, 1 Joh. 1. 5, 6, 7. The Scriptures therefore do frequently offer to the application of Conſcience, both negative Marks and poſitive together; that by the application of the former we may correct our miſtakes; and by the latter we may confirm our minds, in what is aſſumed by Conſcience, as to our being in Chriſt, and in a condition of Bleſſedneſs; as *Rom.* 8. 1, 9, 10, 11. *Pſal.* 1. 1, 2. *Epheſ.* 4. 20.---25. And the Apoſtle thinks it fit to ſubjoyn ſometimes to the teſtimony of his Conſcience; the reaſons upon which that teſtimony was raiſed, and from whence it reſulted, 2 *Cor.* 1. 12, 13. *Rom.* 9. 1, 2, 3. 5. The crediting of Conſcience its teſtimony therefore in ſuch Propoſitions as are capable of further proof, is not ſafe for us ordinarily without the calling in, and conſidering of thoſe proofs firſt had and made. And it is of ſingular uſe in ſuch a caſe, to put Conſcience afreſh to the queſtion, before it comes to a Concluſive determination, that ſuch a teſtimony is of indubitable truth. As, *There is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt*; (a Propoſition of infallible verity.) But I am in Chriſt, ſaith Conſcience: This Aſſumption ſhould be again put to the queſtion, and requireth proof and confirmation, as the Apoſtle ſeems to imply, by adding ſo many Characteriſtical ſigns, *They that are in Chriſt walk not after the fleſh, but after the ſpirit; are made free from the Law of ſin and death.* i.e. from the prevailing and binding power

thereof. In ſuch the body is dead becauſe of ſin, and the ſpirit is life becauſe of righteouſneſs. Can Conſcience now again aſſume? But this is our walk, we are thus free, our ſins thus mortified, and our ſpirits thus vivifyed to righteouſneſs and holineſs. Or as elſewhere, *They that are in Chriſt are new Creatures.* Doth Conſcience ſay, we are new Creatures? Preſs her to give you the proof of what ſhe ſaith: They that are new Creatures have old things paſt away, all things are become new; have put off the old man, and put on the new. And now attend whether Conſcience can aſſume, as in the preſence of God. All things are paſt away, all things are become new in and to us, *&c. Rom.* 8. 1, 10. 2 *Cor.* 5. 17. *Epheſ.* 4. 22, 24.

(2) Let Conſcience deliberate, before ſhe delivers in her Teſtimony. Bethink thy ſelf, and bring this witneſs (as they were their wickedneſs, 1 *King.*8. 47.) back again to thine heart. *Conſider your ways, and let not thine heart be haſty to utter any thing before God. David's* haſte did more than once diſturb his peace, and drew the *Jews* into a fools Paradiſe: *Hag.*1.5, 7. *Eccleſ.* 5. 2. *Pſal.* 31.22. *Iſa.* 5.12. *Hoſ.*7.2. Know therefore this day and conſider it in thine heart. 1. To and before whom ſhe is to render this witneſs or report. 'Tis not to thy ſelf only but unto God alſo. He knoweth the way that thou doſt take. *The heart* (ſaith he) *is deceitful above all things, who can know it? I the Lord ſearch the heart, I try the reins, &c. Job.* 23. 10. *Jer.* 17. 9, 10. O my Conſcience,

if

if thou ſhalt not ſpeak home and ſpeak uprightly, ſhall not God ſearch it out? for he knoweth the ſecrets of the heart. The righteous God trieth the heart and reins. Doſt thou bear this witneſs in the Holy Ghoſt? *Pſal.* 44. 21. & 7. 10. *Rom.* 9. 1. 2. What the rule or mark is, according to which ſhe is thus to witneſs and report. Compare Spiritual things with *Spiritual*; thy ſelf not with thy ſelf; but with the ſign or ſtandard, by which thou art to meaſure thy ſtate. Take not only an occaſional or tranſient view of what that ſpeaketh, and thou art or doſt. But let thy conſultations therewith be frequent, ordinary, deliberate, deep. *Who ſo looketh into the perfect Law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man ſhall be bleſſed in his deed:* 2 Cor. 10. 12. Jam. 1. 23, 24, 25. 3. What reaſon is there that ſhe ſhould make this report. O my Conſcience, how canſt thou clear up this thy Teſtimony? Of which before. 4. What will be the reſult of this witneſs or report? Shouldſt not thou now deal faithfully with me, what a fearful deluge of preſumption, &c. would henceforth overflow me! and what floods of dedolence, pride, &c. would henceforth alſo oppreſs! My converſion will be leſs poſſible, and thy condemnation and torment more perplexing and full of horrour: *Act.* 28. 26, 27. *Luk.* 13. 27, 28, 29.

(3) Let Conſcience be dealt with truly and impartially by thee, that ſhe may deal forth a true and impartial teſtimony to thee. 1. Charge her

her to be herein true and thorow with thee. By her concernment in it. Who ſhall witneſs if Conſcience do not? *For no man knoweth the things of a man, ſave the ſpirit of man, which is in him.* God hath ſet thee, O my Conſcience, as that heap and pillar to be a witneſs between him and me: 1 *Cor.* 2. 11. *Gen.* 31. 52. *Rom.* 2. 15. By her Commands for it. God hath choſen her for this purpoſe, and chargeth her in his Laws, to be a Miniſter and Witneſs both of thoſe things which ſhe hath ſeen, (like *Paul*) and of thoſe things in the which he ſhall appear to her: *Rom. ibid.* 2 *Cor.* 4. 2. *Act.* 26. 16. By the Covenant and Oath of God, which ſhe hath taken for it. The vows of God are upon thee, to be a faithfulful Witneſs that will not lie. And wouldſt thou have him to be a ſwift Witneſs againſt thee? *Prov.* 14. 5. *Mal.* 3. 5. By the conſequence of it to her, as well as thee; by the bleſſed effects on the one hand, by the bitter effects on the other. 2. Keep off ſuch as would tamper with her, and either keep her from giving witneſs, or corrupt her in the witneſs ſhe doth give. *Keep thine heart with all diligence.* Sin is ready to buy off her teſtimony with its pleaſures; Senſe, to bribe her with its profits; Satan, to befool and enſnare her with his policies. *Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation.* Set a guard upon Conſcience. Let not theſe come nigh the corner of her houſe. *He that doth keep his ſoul ſhall be far from them:* Prov. 4. 23. Mat. 26. 41. Prov. 22. 5. 3. Cloſe with her Teſtimony, though

ſhe

ſhe ſpeak againſt thee. Let not thy Affections kick, and thy Will caſt it back upon Conſcience, to give a more favourable witneſs for thee. 'Tis better Conſcience ſhould be a ſevere Witneſs here, than a never-dying Worm hereafter. The more fully and faithfully ſhe teſtifieth, the more friendly is ſhe, and the more it turneth to thy felicity. *Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kiſſes of an enemy are deceitful*, Pſal. 141. 5. Prov. 27. 6.

(4) Let Conſcience be told ever and anon of the Teſtimony ſhe muſt deliver in the day of Judgment. Then the Books ſhall be opened, the Book of Conſcience within, as well as of Creatures and Scriptures without. Then muſt thou, ſhalt thou, O my Conſcience, give a plain and impartial Teſtimony to all things done in the body. Then all thy frauds and fallacies, which thou now putteſt upon me, ſhall be unvailed and pluckt off, before God, Men and Angels. Then ſhalt thou bear the ſhame of them, and muſt ſuffer for them. Thy flatteries and unfaithfulneſs ſhall be all laid bare and open. Oh how much better were it for thee, and me, to bring forth thy righteous Teſtimony now to our Converſion, than in that day to our Confuſion! Alas! what can be hid from him who knoweth all things? *Doth not he that pondereth the heart conſider it?* Thou mayſt deceive me, but canſt thou deceive my God alſo? That day ſhall diſcover it. If thou feareſt the ſhame and ſting of ſuch a Witneſs in this day, ſhouldſt not thou rather fear and fly the ſhame and ſting thereof in that day?

Now

Now it may be eaſed and healed by Repentance. Defer thy Teſtimony till then, and the ſhame and torment will be eaſleſs, endleſs and remedileſs: *Rev.*20.12. 2 *Cor.*5.10. *Eccleſ.* 12. 14. *Mar.* 9. 44.

(5) Let Conſcience be demanded to give her Witneſs as in the preſence of God the great Judg. Charge her to ſpeak to thee, as ſhe would ſpeak to and before him. Is not the anſwer of a good Conſcience towards God? O my Conſcience, is not God greater than thy ſelf, and knoweth all things? Wilt thou witneſs this thing to God for me, as *Peter*'s did? *Thou knoweſt all things, thou knoweſt that I love thee.* And canſt thou appeal him as a Witneſs in the caſe, with and for thee, as he alſo did? Canſt thou atteſt him? as they did, (*Joſh.* 22. 21, 22.) *The Lord God of Gods, the Lord God of Gods, he knoweth.* Canſt thou ſay, and ſay truly, *Behold my witneſs is in heaven, and my record is on high*, as *Job* did? And wilt thou anſwer to him for me, what thou now anſwereſt me as before him? *Lo! O Lord, thou knoweſt. Thou, O Lord, knoweſt me, thou haſt ſeen me and tried mine heart. Thou haſt tried me, and ſhalt find nothing. Thou knoweſt that I am not wicked:* 1 Pet. 3. 21. 1 Joh. 3.20. Joh. 21. 15, 17. Job 16. 19. Pſal. 40. 9. Jer. 12.3. Pſal. 17.3. Job 10.7.

Direct. 3. Touching the Concluſion, wherein Conſcience is to denounce the ſentence, upon the trial made, agreeable to the truth ſhe dictateth in the Propoſition, and to the teſtimony which ſhe delivereth in the Aſſumption. Here I adviſe, (1) See

(1) See that Conſcience pronounce the ſentence upon thee. Or why are all theſe proceeds hitherto? Why are 1. the word and ſtatutes of Heaven conſulted? 2. The Court ſet? 3. The Witneſs ſworn and heard? Shall the Records of Heaven be produced, and the Records of my Heart proved to no purpoſe? Haſt thou done ſo many things, O my Conſcience in vain, if it ſhall be yet in vain? But becauſe Conſcience is ſo prone to protract the ſentence, and to forbear the concluſion, which ſhould follow upon the Premiſſes, and doth naturally and neceſſary follow upon the Propoſition and Aſſumption in a Logical diſcourſe, as one well obſerveth *. I adviſe theſe things, 1. If Conſcience be ſilent, ſuſpect thy condition is not well, or that (at leaſt) it is not well with Conſcience. I ſhall not ſay, that her ſuſpending of the Concluſion doth always ſpeak the condition and ſtate of the Soul to be a ſtate of ſin. Becauſe deſerted Saints through the power of fear and temptations, and the weakneſs of their faith in ſuch troubles may not be able to derive and draw it down to themſelves. But ordinarily (and out of the caſe of deſertion) it ſpeaks the condition ill, and lyable to ſuſpition. 'Twas not well with *David*, when he turns the concluſion and ſentence to another, which he ſhould have taken to himſelf, and the Prophet was fain to take up the office of Conſcience, and tell him, *Thou art the man, &c.* He cannot be apprehended to have been either ignorant of God's Law, or of his own laſcivious and murtherous fact. But Conſci-

* See *Ames. de Conſc. l.* 1. *c.* 9. §. 5. — 10.

ence

ence did not conclude, or argue and apply it home. And it was very ill with them, who knowing the judgment of God, that they who did ſuch things were worthy of death, and that they did them, yet concluded not their eſtate upon it, but continued in their ſin. Nor was their condition ſafe, or Conſcience ſound, that could wave the Concluſion, when the Premiſſes were ſo clear, *Neither ſay they in their heart, let us now fear the Lord, &c.* Jer. 5. 23, 24. 2 *Sam.* 12. 5, 6, 7. *Rom.* 1. 32. 2. If Conſcience do not ſpeak to thee, do thou ſpeak to Conſcience. God complaineth when men do not ſet and ſay to their hearts, when they do not call upon and converſe with them: *Iſa.* 44. 19. *Hoſ.* 7. 2. Argue it with her, and urge her to proceed to ſentence, and to perfect her diſcourſe in giving judgment. Urge her by her paſt proceeds (of which before.) By her place and power. Hath not God made thee a Judg in Iſrael, ſet thee next under himſelf, and over me, that thou ſhouldſt ſhew me the ſentence in judgment? Is not thy commiſſion Divine? His concurrence declared, who is with you in the judgment to behold if thou judgeſt falſly, to approve if thy judgment be according to verity? *Deut.* 17. 9. 2 *Chron.* 19. 6. 1 *Joh.* 3. 20, 21. By her Precedency. Thou expecteſt from inferiour Judges that they proceed to judgment, and wilt expoſtulate and rebuke them if they ſhall adventure to retard it, and judgment goeth not forth. Thou art ſuperiour to any, to all of them. God hath ſet thee (as *Solomon* ſet his Mother) next himſelf

on

on the Throne. And if thou ſhalt clear, no matter if they all condemn me. But if thou condemn, not all of them can quit me. May not they dare to adventure upon unneceſſary delays in Civil concernments, and durſt thou to delay and defer the ſentence in Spiritual, in Soul-matters, and of eternal conſequence? *Deut.* 16. 18, 19, 20. *Hab.* 1. 4. 1 *King.* 2. 19. *Rom.* 8. 33, *&c.* 1 *Joh.* 3. 20. By her Principles. Civil Judges have ſeverals to conſult without them, ere they can come to ſentence. But thou, O my Conſcience, containeſt all within thee, whereby thou mayſt be both clear and quick, or expeditious in the judgment. Thou needſt not call for Law-books, or foreign Witneſſes. With thee is a treaſury of Laws, and thou art more than a thouſand Witneſſes. 3. If Conſcience yet ſuſpends judgment, cite her before the ſupream Judg. Behold Conſcience, *the Judg ſtandeth before the door.* He is greater than the Conſcience, to him thou muſt accompt. Thou mayſt apologize to me, but how wilt thou anſwer it to him, who made thee his deputy, and ſubſtituted thee upon this very deſign? And hath ſaid to Conſcience, as *Jehoſhaphat* to his Judges, *Take heed what ye do, for ye judg not for man but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgment: Wherefore take heed, and do it:* Jam. 5. 9. 1 Joh. 30. 20. 2 Chron. 19. 5, 6, 7.

(2) See that Conſcience pronounce the ſentence fully and clearly upon thee. An half-ſentence can give but half-ſatisfaction. If the ſentence be dubious, thy Soul will ſtill be in the

the dark. Why all this pains? Not for airy hopes, but for aſſurance of the heart before God: 1 *Joh.* 3. 19. To this end, 1. Be full and clear with Conſcience, in expoſing all thou art and doſt, to her ſentence, without any of the reſtraints of ſelf-love, without any reſerve for any ſecret luſts. Self-love will be putting in for her immunities. A clear and impartial ſentence will ſhake all her foundations hitherto of quiet and ſelf-eaſe. And therefore importuneth Conſcience, as *David* ſometime did his chief Commanders, *Deal gently for my ſake, yea and for thy own ſake:* for thou muſt ſuſtain the effects of ſuch a ſentence: 2 *Tim.* 3. 2. *cum* 5. 2 *Sam.* 18. 5. Secret luſts will be putting in for an indemnity, which it may be Conſcience hath cockered, or (at leaſt) hitherto connived at. *Wherefore ſhould we be ſlain? Have not we took ſweet counſel together and walked to the houſe of God in company, &c.* But Conſcience muſt quit them ere it can clear thee. 'Twill be a partial ſentence, if ſhe parteth not with theſe ſins. Or if ſhe ſpeak peace, it will be but the ſhew and paint of it, ſo long as ye will walk after the imagination of your own hearts: *Pſal.* 19. 12, 13. & 18. 23. *Deut.* 29. 19. Bring all then before the Bar of Conſcience, and that Bar without any vails or coverts; and tell her (as *Cornelius* told *Peter*) *we are all here preſent before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God:* Act. 10. 33. 2. Be free, yet cloſe with Conſcience. You may remember her, there will be another *audit*, and what will attend, if ſhe ſhall give a looſe

or

or partial judgment, *Curſed be he that perverteth judgment.* But remember her withal that therefore this thy appearance is made before her throne of Judicature, and thou demandeſt it as thy right; not as a matter of courteſie from her, but as of debt and duty. As of old, it was ordained, *Thou ſhalt come to the Judg and enquire, and he ſhall ſhew thee the ſentence of judgment*, Deut. 27. 19. *c.* 17. 9. See thou do not ſee her by any carnal indulgence, *for a gift blindeth the eyes of the wiſe and perverteth the words of righteouſneſs*; and fire ſhall conſume the tabernacles of bribery: *Deut.* 16. 19, *Job* 15. 34. Nor flatter her by any corrupt inducements: *The flattering mouth worketh ruin. Pſal.* 36. 2. *Prov.* 26. 28. Be plain with Conſcience. Lo, I have now put my ſelf, my ſtate, my ſalvation upon thy ſentence. 'Tis thy work to condemn or clear me; thy eternal wo or weal is concerned in it. I require thee, as before the ſupream and all-ſeeing Judg, to judg righteouſly. I do not ſollicite for favour, but ſeek juſtice at thy mouth. How long ſhall I take counſel in my ſoul? When wilt thou bring it to a concluſion, that I may know my eſtate, what I am? Follow her with arguments and importunities, till ſhe anſwereth thee, in the words of the *Pſalmiſt*, *I will judg uprightly*, *Pſal.* 75. 2.

Q. 4. *How may we difference the Peace of a good and of an evil Conſcience? and ſo diſcern that ours is a ſound and an Evangelical Peace.*

* See *Fenner's Treat. of Conſc. p.* 137. *to* 167. *Robinſons Chriſt all in all. p.* 187, 188 *Collin's right way to true peace. p.* 51. *ad* 62.

Doubtleſs there is a difference *, or our Saviour had not delivered it as he doth, *Joh.* 14. 27. *cum* 22. But he that would drive this nail to the head, for the diſcovery of his own peace, whether it be true or falſe, ſhould diſcuſs it thorowly with his own Conſcience, how it came to take up this peace. The peace that an evil Conſcience bears, groweth uſually out of one of theſe two roots. 1. Either out of the ſluggiſhneſs of Conſcience that puts not the eſtate upon trial. 2. Or from the ſhifts and unfaithfulneſs of Conſcience if it proceed to trial. 1. Either in the Propoſition 2. Or in the Aſſumption. 3. Or in the Concluſion as hath been ſhewed. You ſhould dig to the very bottom in this buſineſs. Whether this peace be the product of pains, prayers, and of proving your hearts and ſtates once and again? What pains did Conſcience take in it? What proceed did Conſcience make in it? Did it give full and infallible marks for the trial of your eſtates? Did it give a faithful and impartial reſtimony in the trial. And did it give a free and unbiaſſed judgment upon the trial of your eſtates. Produce and prove thy Evidences; That your enmity againſt godlineſs is turned into peace, and therewith amity. That you are as earneſt for holineſs, as you were for ſin, or are for happineſs; and as great

great a friend to the purity, as to the peace of Conſcience. Prove that the ſpirit of peace hath renewed and ſanctified you. That the Prince of Peace Chriſt Jeſus ruleth in, and hath the Soveraignty over you. That the God of peace is related, as a Father to you, and is that ſupream good and end to whom you finally refer your ſelves in point of felicity and duty; and then your peace (which is gathered from theſe Premiſſes) is proved therewith to be true, pious, and Evangelical. But to give you the difference enquired after, though every thing I herewith offer doth not ſerve to diſcover it effectually in ſuch a practical inquiry without ſome further reference.

The Evangelical peace of the good Conſcience, and the quiet or peace of an evil Conſcience are different.

1. *In the eminency of this Evangelical Peace.* 1. In point of truth. That other is but the ſhadow and ſemblance of peace, but this is ſolid, ſubſtantial peace. 'Tis peace, peace, *Iſa.* 26. 3. *c.* 57. 19. not only the reſemblance or appearance of peace; but real, rich, aſſured, abundant peace. *But there is no peace, ſaith my God, unto the wicked,* ver. 21. Iſa. 48. 22. Let men call it by the title of peace, yet God accounts it to be in truth no peace. (2) In point of tranquillity. That other is moſtly but negative, a freedom from ſtorms, but this is poſitive a fulneſs of ſerenity. There Conſcience is aſleep, and therefore quiet; but here it's awake and at work, and therefore are they comforted; yea, filled oft-times with comfort,

under variety of croſſes. They are not only not vexed, not frighted, or only fed by Conſcience, but find a continual feaſt in the peace of their Conſcience: 2 *Cor.* 1. 1, 2. *c.* 7. 4. *Prov.* 15. 15. (3) In point of tranſcendency. That ſoon evaporates into airy imaginations, and intoxicates affections. But this peace is both ſerious and ſuperlative. The Soul feels what the other never found, or can fathom. Nay he feels more than himſelf can utter, or indeed comprehenſively underſtand. This peace paſſeth all underſtanding; not only others, but his own: *Rev.* 2. 17. *Phil.* 4. 7. (4) In the principle transfering it. *Peace I leave with you*, (ſaith Chriſt) *my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you:* Joh. 14. 27. (5) In the proper treaſury of it. *Theſe things have I ſpoken* (ſaith he) *that in me ye might have peace:* Joh. 16. 33. This is not a peace then of the world's giving, nor of our own getting. We neither get it of our ſelves, nor get it out of our ſelves. 'Tis a peace of Chriſts giving; the Chriſtian goeth to him for it, in the purity of peace, and glorieth in him as the procurer and peculiar object of his peace. He is our peace, ſay Believers: *Rom.* 5. 1. *c.* 2. 7. *Epheſ.* 2. 14.

2. *In the extent of Evangelical peace.* See (1) from what it extendeth it ſelf. 1. From the indwelling of Satan. He like a ſtrong man armed keeps the other's heart as his houſe, and ſo its peace, while his poſſeſſion is undiſturbed. Being willing captives, in whom he works effectually, he ſuffers them to walk at eaſe

eaſe and quiet: *Luk.* 11. 21. 2 *Tim.* 2. 26. *Epheſ.* 2. 2. But this peace alway preſuppoſeth his diſpoſſeſſion, and deveſtment from power; the binding of him for you, and the bruiſing of him under you, the taking of his armor from him, and treading of him under the feet of you. *The God of peace ſhall bruiſe, or tread Satan under your feet ſhortly*, Luk. *ibid.* & 22. Col. 1. 13. Rom. 16. 20. 2. From the dominion of ſin. The ſecurity of the evil Conſcience is, in that ſin hath the entire command, and ſuffers not conviction to embroil Conſcience: *Rom.* 1. 21. *&c.* 7. 9. *Amos* 6. 1, 3, *&c.* But Evangelical ſecurity is founded upon the excuſſion of ſin, and extruſion thereof out of command and authority in the Soul. While ſin reigns there is no ſound reſt. *To be carnally minded is death; to be ſpiritually minded is life and peace*, Pſal. 19. 13. Rom. 2. 8, 9, 10. *c.* 7. 9, 10, 11. *c.* 8. 6. 3. From the diſpleaſure of God. The tranquillity of evil Conſciences is taken up moſtly, either from God's ſeeming ſilence at their ſins, and ſuſpending of his ſeverities, or from their inſenſibleneſs of what he threatens, and ſhifting it from themſelves to others, or from the ſmiles of his providence upon them in common enjoyments and bleſſings. When yet all this while he reſerves his anger, and it ſhall ſmoke againſt ſuch ſinners: *Pſal.* 50. 21, 22. *Eccleſ.* 8. 11. *Deut.* 29. 19, 20. *Mal.* 2. 2. But Evangelical peace extends it ſelf beyond God's not puniſhing, or not threatning, or not being provoked, and beyond God's proſpering and preſerving. His comforts are, that God is his

portion, God is pleaſed, his perſon juſtified, and his works accepted. His cares are how he may pleaſe God, and walk worthy of his good pleaſure; and never is he ſo cheery as in the Conſcience of this, that he pleaſeth God, which trieth our hearts: *Pſal.* 4. 8. *Rom.* 5. 1. *Eccleſ.* 9. 7. 1 *Cor.* 7. 32. *Col.* 1. 10. *Heb.* 11, 5. 1 *Theſ.* 2. 4. In examining then the truth of this peace, let theſe be ſome of thy principal enquiries. Whether Satan was ever diſturbed and dethroned, and thy Soul delivered from under his power, in the dominion of the Prince of Peace, and to do and endure his pleaſure? Whether ſin be dead in thee, and thou to ſin, and thy Soul deſireth as well peace from ſin and power againſt ſin, as to be preſerved from ſmart and anguiſh? Whether God be pleaſed with thee, and thy greateſt care be to pleaſe him, and to commend thy Conſcience and Converſation to his ſight and approbation?

(2) *See what this Evangelical Peace extendeth it ſelf unto.* 1. To all the ſubject, the whole Conſcience, yea the whole Chriſtian to comfort, keep, confirm him in his Communion with God. But eſpecially it ſhall keep your hearts and minds, and theſe in believing, your inward powers in the inward power of godlineſs: *Phil.* 4. 7. *Rom.* 15, 13. 2. To all Circumſtances, for the enjoyment of it ſelf under them, and the improvement of it ſelf by them. While he ſenſeth this peace, he can ſwallow any perſecution; nor only rejoyce in hope of the glory of God, but glory in tribulation alſo, *&c.* *Rom.* 5. 1, 2, 3. (3) To all the Cauſes; Supream,

pream, ſubordinate. *Supream*, Oh! how it extendeth it ſelf to the God of Peace, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, in an enriching Communion with them, an exact Conformity to them, and a moſt endearing Complacency in and with them, while the God of Love and Peace is with theſe: *Rev.* 1. 4, 5. *Phil.* 4. 9. *Heb.* 13. 20, 21. *Subordinate*; How are their own feet ſhod with the preparation of the Goſpel of Peace! and how beautiful are others feet to them that preach the Goſpel of Peace, and bring the glad tydings of theſe good things! *Epheſ.* 6. 15. *Rom.* 10. 15. Wouldſt try the truth of thy Peace? turn in hither, and examine the extent of it by theſe particulars: that falſe peace falls ſhort; and though (like thoſe Locuſts St. *John* mentioneth, which had the faces of men, *Rev.* 9. 7, 10.) it may have ſome appearance of, and approaches toward this peace; yet as they were fierce and far from the nature of men, ſo it is utterly alien from, and adverſe unto it in theſe particulars.

3. *In the efficient, matter, form, and end of this Evangelical Peace.* Theſe kinds of peace are widely different, when the cauſes are ſo wide and different. 'Tis called the Peace of God, *Phil.* 4. 7. This is a peace that cometh from God, he is the maker of it. 2. In Communion with God, here is the principal matter of it, 3. Conformable to God, here is the mould and form of it. 4. Carried after and concludeth in and with God; he is the ultimate end of it, (1) Enquire then into the efficient of

your peace. The *Principal.* Came it from the God of Peace? That other peace is of our own or others coyning, but this is of God's creating. 'Tis he that fills with peace in believing: *Isa.* 57. 19. *Rom.* 15. 13. If it came from God it carrieth thee to and keeps thee with God. Hither doth this Soul turn alone for peace. On him he truſts for peace, and with him he tarries till he ſhall ſpeak peace: *Hoſ.* 6. 1. *Iſa.* 26. 3. *Pſal.* 85. 8. The *Procatarctick.* Came it through and by the blood of Chriſt? Peace of Conſcience is of Chriſt's procuring. He got it for you by the merit of Redemption. He gives it to you by the ſpirit of Regeneration. This Man ſhall be the peace when Divine juſtice on the one hand, or the Devil on the other hand, like the *Aſſyrian*, ſhall invade Conſcience: *Joh.* 14. 27. *Phil.* 4. 7. *Mich.* 5. 5. Is the blood of his Croſs then that peace-offering you preſent unto the Father? the peace you plead for, is it upon the account of your ſervice, or of his ſatisfaction? of your deſerts, or of his death for you? There is no preaching peace but by Jeſus Chriſt: *Col.* 1. 20. *Act.* 10. 36. The prime *inſtruments* of your peace, what were, or what are they? Was it the Goſpel of Peace? then will the Miniſtration and Miniſtry thereof be more beautiful in your eyes: *Nah.* 1. 15. *Iſa.* 52. 7. Was it the grace of faith? 'Tis firſt grace, then peace, throughout the Goſpel. No peace before grace, much leſs without grace. 'Tis believing in Chriſt that brings the calm upon the Conſcience. *Being juſtified by faith*

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we have peace with God, Rom. 1. 7. 1 Cor. 1. 3. Joh. 14. 1. Rom. 5. 1. Try your faith then, whether it be beyond temporary? whether it be truly juſtifying, ere you take up with peace? He cannot be the God of peace to you, if he be not the God of hope and faith unto you. *The God of hope fill you with peace in believing*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 15. 13.

(2) *Enquire into the matter of your Peace, not ſo much that of which it conſiſteth, as about which it is converſant.* To mention but an head or two. 1. Is it Communion with God? which conſiſts in that mutual relation, and thoſe mutual returns which paſs 'twixt God and a Believer in the deſcending of his graces, and aſcending of our duties. What ſay you? are theſe the matters that take up the tranquillity of your mind? the mutual intereſt that God and you have in each other, that he is yours, and you are his? the mutual intercourſe that you have with each other, in his mercies and your duties? while he draweth nigh to you, in extending the grace of his favour, and you draw nigh to him in exerciſing the graces of his Spirit. This, this is the heart of Evangelical Peace, acquaintance with God; fellowſhip with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt. Here the believing Soul doth lye down in Peace: *Job* 22. 21. 1 *Joh.* 1. 3. 4. *Pſal.* 4. 6, 8. 2. Is it the Kingdom of God ſpecially in and over you? That falſe peace is never thorow in the former, and taketh its leave in this latter. It may be taken with God's love, but turns aſide from

from his laws, especially from that part, which is cross to his carnal interest. But Evangelical peace hath endearing and precious thoughts of the very laws, the rule and restraints of Divine Government. He rejoyceth and worketh righteousness, and the work of righteousness is his peace, and rejoycing: *Psal.* 119. 165.——169. *Isa.* 65. 5. *c.* 32. 17. How is Conscience pleased then with the commands of God? in that he hath the dominion of Conscience and will not dispense with the least corruptions, and will have the ducture of your whole Conversations? Read the language and resolution herein of the good and peaceable Conscience: *Isa.* 26. 12, 13.

(3) *Enquire into the formal cause.* There is no Gospel-peace of Conscience but what is spoken by God, thorow Christ in the Gospel. The peace spoken by Conscence through the Gospel, standing in an accord to what is spoken by Christ in the Gospel. And it is not only therefore called the peace of God *, in that it is caused principally by him; he is the fountain of it. But in regard of the conformity thereof to his pleasure, which gives form and being to it. Thus Evangelical Conscience doth not absolve or justifie before or without God, but with and because God absolves and justifies *. It 1. reads and reviews God's sentence of peace in the Gospel. *Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus. There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ, &c. As many as walk according to this rule peace shall be upon them.* [1 Pet. 5. 14.

* Phil. 4. 7.

* Rom. 5. 1, 9.

Rom.

Rom.8.1. Gal.6.16] 2. It reflects and reſumes. But I (who walk not after the fleſh but after the ſpirit) am in Chriſt. I walk after this rule (as God himſelf is my witneſs.) Hence 3. he reports and agrees God's ſentence in the Goſpel to his own Soul in particular. Therefore to me is peace. God hath cleared me, therefore Conſcience cleareth me. And ſo have I quietneſs in and confidence toward God. *Behold my witneſs is in heaven, and my record is on high*, 1 Joh. 3.21. Job 34.29. c. 16.19. Well then, it muſt be peace in Heaven, or there can be no peace (to ſpeak properly) in your hearts. Your hearts are at peace, becauſe heaven is at peace, and this heart-peace bears accord with heavens peace *. And be ſure God can never ſpeak peace in you upon any other terms than he hath in the Goſpel ſpoken peace to you.

* Luk.2. 14. & 19. 38.

(4) *Enquire into the final cauſe.* This peace of God is finally for the God of peace; it ſits not down in ſelf-eaſe, but is ſet for his ſervice, and the enjoyment of himſelf. Yea, it not only purſueth good works, but would be made perfect to every good work. Nor doth this Soul content it ſelf in the ſweets of this joy and peace, but his care and character is, that in theſe things he ſerveth Chriſt; *Heb.* 9. 14, *chap.* 13. 20, 21. *Rom.* 14. 17, 18. Whither doth your peace then extend, and where doth it terminate it ſelf? True peace of Conſcience can never take up ſhort of God in Chriſt. This is its earneſt expectation and hope that ſhall be magnified, and his

his ſervice maintained, and his own Soul ſhall more abound in holineſs, and in hope through the power of the Holy Ghoſt. The thoughts of this heart are not only taken up about his own felicity and peace, but about the furtherance of God's praiſe, the fulfilling of his pleaſure, and the peaceable fruits of righteouſneſs. *If there be any vertue, if there be any praiſe*, he thinks on theſe things: *Phil.* 1. 20. *Rom.* 15. 13. *Jam.* 3. 18. *Phil.* 4. 7, 8. In ſhort, as this peace is by reception from God, ſo its reſt is in and with God. It lifts up the Soul unto him, lifts him upmoſt in the Soul; lays its charge thereon to repoſe her ſelf upon him, to rejoyce in him, and upon every miſcarriage to return to him as her only reſt and center: *Pſal.* 86. 4. c. 73. 25, 26, & 62, 5, & 116. 7.

4. *The peace of a good and evil Conſcience are differenced in and by the effects of it.* The peace of an evil Conſcience uſually renders men leſs circumſpect and inobſervant of ſpiritual dangers, more ſlight and overly in ſpiritual duties, *&c.* But Evangelical peace ends in (1) Greater vigilance over himſelf, and againſt ſin, ſatan, as alſo in the objects of ſenſe, that he turn not again to folly: *Pſal.* 85. 8. *Rom.* 16. 19, 20. 1 *Theſ.* 5, 5, 6, 8, 9. Doth this peace then make you draw off your guards and centinels, or make you more diligent and circumſpect? (2) Greater fortitude of ſpirit; forbearing troubles, breaking thorow tentations, and baffling all the aſſaults of fleſh and blood upon the ſanctified habits and faculties.

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The peace of God ſhall keep your hearts and minds, ſaith the Apoſtle. φρουρήσει, *ſhall keep it as with a garriſon*; as that word is elſewhere uſed: *Joh.* 16. 33. *Phil.* 4. 7. *cum* 2 *Cor.* 11. 32. It ſhall fit you for reſiſtance, fill you with reſolution, and free you from thoſe returns of fraud and force, which make others become their priſoners *. Doth this peace then cool and ſlacken your reſolutions for duty, eſpecially in caſe of diſcouragements and difficulty, or doth it quicken and add ſpurs and wings to it? (3) Greater vigors of obedience. A formal peace is the beſt effect uſually of that Phariſaical peace. But this Evangelical peace is not without an Evangelical power, upon the heart within, and in the acts without: *Rom.* 14. 17. *cum* 1 *Cor.* 4. 20. 2 *Tim.* 1. 3. *cum* 6. This Soul not only maintains a courſe or track in ſpiritual matters, but manageth them with a ſpiritual mind. His ſpiritual peace begets a ſpiritual plenty; and now he can eaſily ſtep over what heretofore ſtumbled him. No offence is ſo great to him as that his obedience is no greater. He not only liveth up to Gods teſtimonies, but he loves him exceedingly: *Rom.* 8. 6. *Pſal.* 119. 165.------169. Doth your peace then make you more ſlight and formal in duty, or more ſpiritual and vigorous? Are they not only more bulky, but more ſtrong and ſincere, fuller of the ſap of love, and of the ſpirit of life? (4) Greater vivacity of Holineſs. Evangelical peace is ever proſpered to Evangelical grace and growth. See how it fructifieth and cluſters:

* ὥστε μὲ ὑπὸ πειραμῶν καταβαρύβζεσθαι. μήτε ὑπὸ ἀπάτης περιφέρεσθαι. Gr. Scho.

Rom.

Rom. 5. 1.----6. *Gal.* 5. 22, 23. Let the day of that falſe peace be as the harveſt-time to the formal hypocrite. His righteouſneſs is now all gathered into barn. But 'tis as the ſeed-time to the faithful ſoul. The fruit of righteouſneſs is ſown in peace: *Jam.* 3. 18. Now is this Soul's time to be diſtributing the ſeeds of righteouſneſs for God and among men; and by the oyl of gladneſs to make increaſe likewiſe of the oyl of grace. This holy peace puts him upon perfecting holineſs in himſelf, and provoking others Souls to take and taſte thereof likewiſe: *Heb.* 13. 20, 21. *Pſal.* 66. 16. & 34. 8. & 51. 12, 13.

Q. 3. *May not the Soul that enjoys eaſe and tranquility after eminent troubles of Conſcience, infer that his is Evangelical peace?*

* See Sheffield's good Conſ. c. 18. pag. 263, &c.

In no wiſe *. Though a good Conſcience may prove greatly troubleſom after great tranquility, yet the greateſt tranquility after the greateſt troubles, cannot ſimply and by it ſelf prove Conſcience good. Becauſe the Devil turns in men hither, and a deceitful heart often taketh up here. I have felt the terrors of the Lord, but now find tranquility and taſte of his love, [as they did, *Heb.* 6. 4, 5, 6. *cum* 9.] Hear me therefore a few things.

1. Every trouble is not a trouble of Conſcience that may be ſo called. 1. There is a trouble of carnal policy. *Herod* is troubled and all *Hieruſalem* with him, but 'tis that Chriſt is born, who might ſhake his Secular King-

Kingdom; not that he was born without Chriſt, or ſeeth no title to an eternal Kingdom. So is the King of *Aſſyria* ſore troubled, But 'tis for the defeating of his Counſels, not for deſtroying his corruptions: *Mat.* 2. 3. 2 *King.* 6. 11. 2. There is a trouble of Concupiſcence and iniquity. *Ahab* is ſo troubled as he taketh his bed upon it; not for want of faith in, or forgiveneſs from God, but for want of the Vineyard. So is *Amnon*, not that his luſt may be ſubdued, but that it may be ſatisfied upon his Siſter *Tamar*: 1 *King.* 21. 4. 2 *Sam.* 13. 2. 3. There is a trouble that is but corporeal and bodily, through exceſs of Melancholy, *&c.* which is ſometimes mixt, ſometimes meerly ſuch. This diſordereth the imagination or fancy. This again diſtempereth the paſſions; theſe diſcompoſe the natural ſpirits; theſe again drive to and fro, and agitate the humours of the body; and ſo all is in a commotion, nothing is quiet. And now happily a mans own ſpirit falls upon him within, and an evil ſpirit from the Lord alſo from without. And then terrour taketh hold of him on every ſide, as it did upon *Saul.* But what are theſe troubles? Rather of ſickneſs than for ſin; from the oppreſſion of nature, rather than in order to grace, at leaſt originally, if not only: 1 *Sam.* 16. 14. I preſume you will not call it peace of Conſcience, to have a period or concluſion put to any or all of theſe.

2. Eminent troubles of Conſcience there may be, and often are, which are neither preparatory to, *Prop.* 2.

nor

nor productive of peace, but rather a providential fulfilling of God's threatnings, and a preface sometimes to greater torments, as they were to *Cain* and *Judas*. Will you read his threatning, *The Lord shall give thee a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind, and thou shalt fear day and night. In the morning thou shalt say, would God it were even, and at even thou shalt say, would God it were morning, for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear*, Deut. 29. 65, 67. Lev. 26. 36. Isa. 8. 21, 22. God may remit then, or remove such troubles, as he doth other temporal judgments, without renovation of the person, or the blessing of a religious peace.

Prop. 3. 3. Eminent troubles of Conscience may and have ended in a still and sapless formality, without sincerity or sanctifying the Conscience. The *Pharisees* are a clear and confessed instance. Conscience arrests the *Jews* with fears and consternation. Away they betake them to a course of prayer and fasting, but in both formal. And so Conscience is at rest, but (as the *Psalmist* observeth) was not *right* in them: *Isa.* 58. 2, *&c. Psal.* 78. 33,——37. *Ananias* and *Sapphira* seem pricked in their heart, but were not purified in their heart. Formality drew out that prick, but drew on their perdition. Conscience takes hold on *Magus*, on *Ahab* and others, and they are troubled. But wherein ended their pangs of Conscience? In a sound peace? No, but in a spiritless profession and practice of some external duties, without any saving change upon them?

All.

Act. 2. 37. *cum* 5. 1, *&c.* 8. 13, *&c.* 1 *King.* 21. 27. *cum c.* 22. This amounts to no more than a ſilencing of ſuch troubles, not the ſanctifying of them. Formality is as bad an evidence of the truth of our peace, as it is of the truth of our grace.

4. Eminent troubles and diſtreſſes of Conſcience may and have ended in ſtupidity and dedolence. The ſmiting, reproving Conſcience may become a ſeared, remorſleſs Conſcience; witneſs *Pharaoah*, *Felix*, *Belſhazzar*. What pangs of Conſcience might you have ſometime found them in! who within a while, inſtead of finding peace, grow paſt feeling: *Exod.* 8. 8. *cum* 15, 28. *cum* 32. *Dan.* 5. 60. 29, 30. *Act.* 24. 25. *cum* 27. And will you call this peace of Conſcience which is a *proeme* rather of eternal condemnation? This is not the ſpirit of peace, but a ſpirit of ſlumber *. *Prop.* 4.

* See *Perkins vol.* 1. *p.* 368.

5. Eminent troubles of Conſcience now paſt, cannot then infer the truth of your preſent peace, as neither can that eaſe and tranquility, which you now poſſeſs, [of which Q. 1.] But that thoſe exigencing perplexities may iſſue in Evangelical peace, there is enjoyned the intercurrence of repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to which theſe troubles are intended as diſpoſitive and preparatory; and without which there is no enjoyment of this Divine peace. The *Jews* were pricked in their heart, κατανύγησαν, The nail was driven to the very head. The iron entred into their very ſouls. *Prop.* 5.

The Jaylor is filled with perplexing troubles, he trembles and falls proſtrate before *Paul* and *Silas*. Both he and they cry out for direction, *What ſhall we do?* The Apoſtles who well knew there might be a ſpirit of bondage, which is never conſequenced with a ſpirit of Adoption, never adviſe them, theſe agonies are enough; you may ſit down in peace; but preſs upon them the neceſſity and uſe of faith and repentance, as prerequiſites to their ſalvation and peace: *Act.*2.37,38. *c.* 16. 29,30,31. *Rom.*8.15.

Prop. 6. 6. Examine then how thou cameſt out of theſe perplexing troubles, and how thou cameſt by this tranquility and peace? 1. Didſt thou arrive hereto in the Goſpel method? What haſt thou found or now findeſt of the Goſpel-prerequiſites to peace, faith in Chriſt and repentance from dead works? What haſt thou felt, or now feeleſt, of the Goſpel-power or efficacy in order to peace? The Goſpel firſt proclaims war in the Soul againſt Sin, the World, and Satan; then publiſheth peace in dethroning theſe uſurpers upon God's Soveraign Prerogative, and the powers of our Souls. The Goſpel firſt preacheth the grace of God to us and in us; and then peace with God unto us. Firſt, purifying the Conſcience by the graces of his Spirit, and then pacifying it in the grace of his favour. The Goſpel firſt carries back the Soul to the God of Peace in an Evangelical converſion, then chears the Soul with this peace of God in Evangelical conſolations. Firſt, hints the Soul unto

unto Chriſt in all his offices of peace for us unto all obedience; then quiets the Soul in the peace that he hath obtained for us; and ordereth out unto us by his holy Spirit. In ſhort, the Goſpel firſt changeth the Soul into the reſemblance and image of God, then and not till then, comforteth it by a review of its intereſt in God, and of God's in him: *Rom.* 8. 5, 6, 7. *c.* 1. 7. *Heb.* 9. 14. *Hoſ.* 6. 1. *Iſa.* 9. 6, 7. 1 *Theſ.* 5. 23. *Pſal.* 4. 8. (2) Is it accompanied with a Goſpel-mould? With an unfeigned and univerſal change of thy heart and life, into the likeneſs of the Goſpel of peace? 'Tis one great branch of the Covenant of Grace, which God hath alſo called the Covenant of his Peace; that he will write his law in our hearts, and put it in our inward parts: *Iſa.* 34. 10. *Ezek.* 34. 25. *c.* 37. 26. *Jer.* 31. 33. So that if thine be a Goſpel-peace, thou art transformed into the Goſpel-pattern. There is a change not only of ſome actions, but of thy eſtate; relative in thy Juſtification, real in thy Sanctification. True peace of Conſcience taketh its riſe from a pious ſenſe of this change: 2 *Cor.* 3. 18. *Rom.* 5. 1. 1 *Joh.* 5. 18, 19, 20.

Q. 5. *What ſhould convinced Sinners do in diſtreſs of Conſcience, as are conſcious to themſelves that they are now in a ſinful and damnable condition?*

A Queſtion long ſince ask'd, and anſwer'd, *Act.* 2. 37, *&c. c.* 16. 30. *&c.* Yet let it not

ſeem amiſs if I offer a few adviſes or directions, which ſhall eſpecially refer unto thoſe two inſtances.

Direct. 1. Accept of your Convictions and do not either put them off, or put them out, or preſs them down. They were pricked in their heart, *Act.* 3. But they abide the pain, are not angry with *Peter*, nor do they pluck out and throw away the arrow. The Jaylor trembleth, in ſuch an agony was he of Conſcience; yet he attempts not either to break priſon from Conſcience, or abuſe the Preachers, who were now his Priſoners, or to precipitate his Comforts. To this end, 1. Remember whence they come; from thy Spirit immediately, but mediately and originally from God's holy Spirit, which is firſt a ſpirit of bondage, then a ſpirit of adoption; firſt convinceth, then comforteth the Conſcience: *Rom.* 8, 15. *Joh.* 16. 8. Will you break his bands aſunder? Take heed, he will make them ſtronger if you continue to reſiſt. But lo ſweetneſs, ſafety, if you cloſe and ſubmit: *Iſa.* 28. 22. *Job* 36. 8,----12. If you will not accept, either he'l away on the one hand, and then oh the hardneſs of your heart! Or elſe add amazement to your anguiſh on the other hand: *Gen.* 6. 3. *Iſa.* 63. 10. 2. Remember their concern, and whither they tend. Theſe fetters are not like thoſe of *Pharaoh*'s Baker, in order to your perdition, but like thoſe of his Butler, or of *Joſeph*'s rather, in order to his preferment. Every pang and throw is preparatory to the new Birth, to that converſion,

verſion, without which thou canſt not ſee the Kingdom of God; and ſo to thoſe conſolations which are wont to enſue upon Chriſt's being formed in the heart. If the Spirit breaks, 'tis in order to binding up; if he prick and launce the heart, 'tis in order to the health and eaſe of his Patient. He is making way by theſe afflictive ſeverities, for the ſweets of Adoption: *Hoſ.* 6. 1. *Act.* 2. 37,38. *Rom.* 8. 15. 3. Remember the conſequence. If you accept, you are half-way over this deep ford. While the Heart, the Will, which commands the other faculties, is ſo far won, the work is like to continue and frame well, to your eaſe and God's ends; who is ready to meet you, as the Father in the Parable did his prodigal Son, when he was yet a great way off: *Mic.* 6.9. *Levit.* 26. 41, *&c. Luk.* 15. 20. And as your buſineſs will ſucceed the better, ſo your burden will ſit much the lighter, (the more you wince, the more you weaken and ſin wounds) you cut off advantages from Satan, and are more capable of improving ſound adviſe, and the Spirit's aſſiſtance. If you do not accept, ſee what attends. Happily a great dedolence and ſtupidity of Conſcience, which is a dreadful inſtance of Divine juſtice: *Rom.* 1. 28. *Prov.* 1. 30. But beyond a perhaps there will be greater dolor; either here, in the approaching arreſts of an abaſed Conſcience to repentance, or hereafter in the anger, aſtoniſhment, and continued gnawing of an accuſing Conſcience to eternal ruin: *Hoſ.* 6. 5. *Prov.* 5. 22, 23.

Direct. 2. Avoid those courses which will defeat thee of the end and happy effect of these Convictions. So did they, *Act.* 2. & 16. They did not; Oh do not you. 1. Either strangle these distresses of Conscience, as if they were but a fit of Melancholy, a foolish Pusillanimity, or (at best) of no profit and inserviency, as they take it: *Mal.* 3. 13, 14. *Job* 21. 14, 15. How many thus seek to stifle Conscience, as *Herod* sought to slay Christ in the very Cradle! 2. Do not study to defer Conscience; now is the accepted time, now is the day of Salvation. Oh! if thou didst know in this *thy day the things that belong to thy peace:* 2 Cor. 6. 2. Luk. 19. 42. *Felix* trembled when Conscience took hold of him, but what doth he? He turns off the Preacher at the Bar, and this Preacher in his bosom, till a more convenient time. He had now something else to do, and we never read that Conscience any more rebuked him: *Act.* 24. 25. 3. Do not seek to divert Conscience, either by carnal pleasures, as *Saul* did. Conscience is moved, and he calls for the Physician. He doth not pray it away, but must have it played away from him. Or by pursute of your callings as *Cain* did. Conscience bruiseth and torments him, and he falls upon building and travels: 1 *Sam.* 16. 14, 17, *&c.* *Gen.* 4. 16, 17. 4. Do not skin over these distresses with the formalities only of Religion, as the *Jews* often. When Conscience within, or calamities without pinch them, they fall a praying and crying, but their heart

heart was not right in them. *Baalam* quiets Conſcience with a few cold wiſhes, and cheap words, in commendation of God's Children. *Ahab* humbleth himſelf, puts on Sackcloth, and goeth ſoftly. *Simon Magus* will be baptized, and become a Chriſtian. The *Phariſee* pays every one of his own, is not as bad as the *Publican*, is as prompt as any to pay the external dues of Religion: *Pſal.* 78. 34, 37. *Numb.* 23. 10, *&c.* 1 *King.* 21. 27. *Act.* 8. 13. *Luk.* 18. 11, 12. Theſe things will but skin over thy wounds without the ſpirit and life of Religion. They will but feſter inwardly without this, and ſooner or latter break out again, as they did in *Magus*, *Ahab*, and others. Much leſs ſhouldſt thou ſlubber it over with unpreſcribed and ſuperſtitious obſervations, as the *Phariſees* did; and have more wo's denounced againſt them than any one ſort of men in all the Scriptures: *Mark.* 7. 3,---14. *Mat.* 23. 14, *&c.* 5. Do not ſwill away theſe diſtreſſes, and debauch thy Conſcience. If the other courſes are ill, this muſt needs be vile. Yet how many cry to Conſcience as the Devil's ſometimes did to Chriſt, *What have we to do with thee, Jeſus, thou Son of God? Art thou come to torment us before the time?* We would fain be merry, while we may. And if Conſcience be clamorous, the drunken rounds muſt out-voice Conſcience. They drink away their Cares and Conſcience. *Surely this iniquity ſhall not be purged away till you die, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts:* Iſa. 22. 12, 13, 14.

Direct. 3. Awaken Conſideration to a juſt ſenſe of thy ſpecial corruption, and therewith of thy ſtate and condition. It was this that drove the nail to the head in their heart: *Act.* 2. 37. *When they heard this* (cum ver. 36.) *they were pricked in their heart.* They did not only cry out of the ſting, but of the ſerpent. *Cain* crieth out of his puniſhment. But a Chriſtian ſhould cry out with *David* of his provocation: *Gen.* 4. 13. 2 *Sam.* 24. 17. Why crieſt thou for thine affliction? thy ſorrow is incurable for the multitude of thine iniquity. (Saith the Lord) *Becauſe thy ſins were encreaſed, I have done theſe things unto thee,* Jer. 30. 15. Now is the time to turn in upon thy ſin, and to take off thy precious Soul from this painted ſtrumpet; whoſe end thou ſeeſt, is bitter as wormwood, ſharp as a two-edged ſword. Now conſider your ways, now that your own doings have beſet you about, and the yoke of thy tranſgreſſions is bound upon thee by the hand of the Lord; they are wreathed and come up upon thy neck: *Hag.* 1. 5, 6, 7. *Hoſ.* 7. 2. *Lam.* 1. 14. Fix not thy thoughts ſo much upon his wrath as thy wickedneſs. *Thy way and thy doings have procured theſe things unto thee; this is thy wickedneſs becauſe it is bitter, becauſe it reacheth unto thine heart,* Jer. 4. 18. c. 2. 17. Nor ſhouldſt thou ſingle out only ſome ſtaring corruption, but ſet before thee thy ſtate and condition. Thus did they, *Act.* 2. & 16. They looked upon their loſt eſtate, and on themſelves as loſt and undone by ſin, as their queſtion

queſtion imports, I am undone, undone, what ſhall I do to be ſaved? *When the Commandment came, ſin revived and I died*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 7. 9. *i.e.* I had the ſentence of death in my own Spirit, I ſaw my ſelf dead in and undone by ſin; Oh I am a dead and undone man without mercy deliver and ſend help. Such conſiderations will quicken endeavours, clear juſtice, and carry thee to Jeſus Chriſt, upon the wings of faith and repentance.

Direct. 4. Ariſe, and ſit not ſtill in complaining. They mind their work, *Act.* 2. *&* 16. and do not only mourn and whine. Complaints both to God and Men may be lawful, yea and uſeful, needful. But complaints only will never honour God, or heal thy Conſcience. This alone will but make thy chain harder, and burden heavier. An ill Balſom for a bleeding wound; and which the great Phyſician of Conſciences bids you forbear: *Jer.* 15. 18. *Pſal.* 42. 11. *Jer.*30.15. *Get thee up*, ſaith the Lord to *Joſhua*, *wherefore lieſt thou thus upon thy face? Iſrael hath ſinned, &c. Joſh.* 7. 10, 11. Complaints of thy ſin will be more acceptable to him, and advantageous to thee than complaints of thy ſuffering. Yet, neither is this enough, God expects to ſee thee working rather than to hear thee weeping, that thou be not ſo much querulous as induſtrious: *Lam.*3.39,40.

Direct. 5. Acknowledg thy caſe, and ask counſel, not only in prayer to God, but in converſe with men. Thus did they, *Act.*2. *&* 16.

They

They do not conceal their diſtreſs, but crave direction. 'Tis an high adventure of folly to let your wounds bleed inwardly. 'Tis better to breath a vein in confeſſion. If there be ſome ſhame in it, there is much ſafety. The ſmart of concealing will be more than the ſhame of confeſſing. 'Twill be ſome eaſe to have emptied your ſelves into anothers boſom, if it do not extricate you out of your ſtraits, and unload your burdens. Spiritual and skilful Surgeons, when they cannot eradicate the diſtemper, yet can and uſually do eaſe and aſſwage the dolor. But to whom ſhould we go? *Anſ.* To whom you ſhould not, I have adviſed already, *Direct.* 5. I adviſe you to apply your ſelves, 1. To experienc'd men, ſuch who are healed of theſe maladies. They can tell you their own caſe and cure, and comforts. And are therefore comforted, to afford you comfort. That they may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, *by the comfort wherewith they themſelves were comforted of God*, 2 *Cor.* 1. 4. Confeſſion is not confined to a Prieſt only, or a Paſtor, by Saint *James*, *Confeſs your faults one to another*, ſaith he, *Jam.* 5. 16. Private perſons might purifie the unclean, as well as the Prieſt, *Numb.* 19. 18, 19. 2. But eſpecially I adviſe you to experienced Miniſters, whoſe experiences may be ſuppoſed more and better; becauſe they have beſides their own the acceſſion of the experiments of others. Yea, they are more intereſted in, intruſted with, and enabled for this work than others. God hath committed to them

them the word of reconciliation; and hath given them the tongue of the learned, that they ſhould know how to ſpeak a word in ſeaſon to him that is weary: 2 *Cor.* 5.19. *Iſa.* 50.4. If there be then ever a *Paul*, or *Silas*, a *Peter* or *Barnabas* about you, a ſon of Conſolation, betake your ſelves to him as theſe here did. Open your Spiritual ſores to him. Let his probe go to the very bottom. Refuſe not his Corroſives, if there be any proud fleſh to be eaten off. Eſpecially receive his Cordials, and apply the healing Medicines, which he preſcribeth, and have a *probatum eſt* upon them. *The Prieſts lips ſhould keep knowledg, and the people ſhould ſeek the Law at his mouth; for he is the Meſſenger of the Lord of hoſts*, Act. 2.37. *c.* 16.29, 30. *c.* 4.36. Mal.2.7. Hag. 2. 11.

Direct. 6. Adviſe your Company, eſpecially as to their counſels. They pickt out other company as ſoon as they were prickt in their own Conſcience: *Act.* 2. & 16. So did *Paul*, *Act.* 9. & *Gal.* 1. Whom they formerly oppoſed now they own. Thy old ſinful company in thy new ſpiritual Convictions is worſe than new wine for old bottles. Beware eſpecially of ſuch as 1. Would drive out this nail out of thy heart, with another fetcht from, and that would faſten thee to Hell. That call thee from thy Convictions to their compotations, corruptions. As if thou couldſt never find peace but in their fleſhly pleaſures. Thou muſt run riot with them, or there is no reſt for thee. My Soul be not thou partaker with them

them. Enter not into their path. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and go away: *Ephes.* 5. 7. *Prov.* 4. 14, 15. *c.* 1. 15, 16. 2. Such as will dig and rake in these wounds; persecuting him whom God hath smitten, and talking to the grief of those whom he hath wounded. Ay, this is your Religion. Here is the fruits of your hearing Sermons, &c. That maketh you amaz'd, or in *Festus*'s language, even mad again. Let thine ear be deaf to their discouragements. O the dreadful imprecations of the *Psalmist* upon such men! *Psal.* 69. 20,----29. 109. 16,----21. *Act.* 26. 24. 3. Such as deride and would scoffe thee out of thy Convictions. What! you'l be a Convert, I warrant you! Will you grow mopish and a melancholy fool too? &c. *Job* and *David* no sooner put on mourning, but there are some presently mocking. *Are there not mockers with me?* saith *Job*. Hypocritical mockers, they are called by *David*, *they shoot out the lip, and shake the head, &c.* Job 17. 2. Psal. 35. 16. *c.* 22. 7. Shut thine ear to such Scoffers. Avoid them as the pests of any place. So they are called by the *Septuagint*: Psal. 1. 1. ἐπὶ καθέδρᾳ λοιμῶν. Surely God scorneth the Scorners: *Prov.* 3. 34. 4. Such as dawb and sooth thee under these Convictions, with untempered mortar. Why such hard thoughts of your self? What need so much ado? 'Tis well enough already, *No evil shall come upon you, &c.* Ezek. 13. 10. 18. Lam. 2. 14. These are miserable Surgeons, that when they should apply Corrosives and Caustick's to your corruptions

ruptions, apply only lenitive or ſtupifying Medicaments. Cruel kindneſs! that kills the Conſcience inſtead of curing it by preaching comfort, without preſſing converſion. *I am againſt theſe Prophets, ſaith the Lord, that ſteal my word every one from his neighbour, that heal the hurt of the daughter of my people ſlightly, ſaying, peace, peace, when there is no peace,* Jer. 23. 30, 14, 17. *c.* 6. 14, *&c.* Liſten not to ſuch Syren-ſongs. Better are the wounds of a friend that preſſeth you with the neceſſity of Converſion, than the kiſſes of an enemy, that precipitateth your conſolation. 'Tis better to have your wounds ſearch'd and ſo ſalv'd than to have them skin'd over, but ſtink and rankle under.

Direct. 7. Apply thy ſelf to the courſe preſcribed thee for thy cure and preſervation. They that askt, *What ſhall we do?* Act. 2. & 16. were reſolved to do what they were adviſed. Now is the time of action, at leaſt of reſolution. Liſtleſs and lazy deſires will leave thee at a deplorable, perhaps irrecoverable loſs. *The ſoul of the ſluggard deſireth and hath nothing, but the ſoul of the diligent ſhall be made fat.* How long wouldſt thou ſleep, Oh ſluggard? Canſt ſee all thy hopes failing thee, thy Houſe fired about thee, Hell flaming before thee; and doth thy heart even faint within thee, and yet talk of folding thy hands to ſleep. I ſay to thee, as *David* to *Solomon, Ariſe and be doing, and the Lord be with thee:* Prov. 13.4. *c.* 6.9,10,11. 1 Chro. 22.16. God hath not bound thee in theſe fetters,

fetters, nor holds thee in theſe cords of affliction to ſhut thee up from working; but to ſhew thee thy work, and ſet thee on it with more ſpeed and ſerioufneſs, and he is ready to give thee ſtrength for, and ſucceſs in it: *Job* 36. 8,----12. *c.* 33. 16.----31. Is the iron blunt? put to the more ſtrength. Is thine inability before thee? Pray in the more of the Spirit. *Lord, help my unbelief. Lord, turn me and I ſhall be turned:* Eccleſ. 10. 10. Mar. 9. 24. Jer. 31. 18. 'Twill be no excuſe for idleneſs that we cannot effectually do any thing without his eſpecial influence and aſſiſtance. Remembring that he hath made this an encouragement, which you would make your excuſe. *Work out your own Salvation, &c. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleaſure:* Phil. 2. 12, 13. I ſhall not here preſcribe a method of cure. See Q. 5. But return thee the ſame ſhort anſwers, which were long ago given to the ſame queſtion, askt by thoſe, *Act.* 2. & 16. *Repent. Believe* *.

* See *Dykes good Conſcience* c. 4. p. 36. ad 45.

(1) Repent, *Act.* 2. 37, 38. *i.e.* Return from thy ſins to God himſelf: *Act.* 26. 20. *Ezek.* 14. 6. Well may Conſcience continue ſmiting, if thou continueſt ſinning, and God be pouring in his wrath, while thou art pouring out thy wickedneſs. *If you will walk contrary to him he alſo will walk contrary to you:* Lev. 26. 18, 21, 24, 28. Or if God and Conſcience forbear ſmiting, when you do not forbear ſinning; 'tis in greater wrath, not of good will. Not that he favours or reſpects you, but that his

his fury may reſt upon you, and the ſtupidity of your Conſciences may ſeal you up to condemnation: *Ezek.* 24. 13. *Pſal.* 81. 11, 12. *Rom.* 1. 24, 28. Off with theſe *Sheba*'s heads, and over the wall with them in ſound repentance, if thou wouldſt no more feel the arrows of the Almighty, or hear the thundering Cannon of a terrified Conſcience. On to God in Chriſt; *if thou wilt return, return unto me ſaith the Lord: Jer.* 7. 1. There is no recovery without returning, *even unto him from all thine iniquity:* Hoſ. 4. 1, 2. Return to him as the only Original of thy being, as the only object that can make thee bleſſed. Yield up thy whole ſelf to his holy Government, thy Conſcience and Converſation to be ordered by his commands. Return to him as thine adequate good, and alone Governour. Put thy whole man under his Soveraignty, preſent thy ſelf a living Sacrifice to him: *Ezek.* 18. 30, 31, 32. *Rom.* 6. 13, 17, 19. *c.* 12. 1. Mourning will not do it without turning; nor this, unleſs it be of the whole man; nor this, unleſs it be unto God: *Joel* 2. 12, 13. *Jer.* 3. 6, 10. Provoke thy ſelf hitherward put on ſtrong and preſent reſolutions. There is no healing till thou com'ſt hither. Till thou acknowledg thy offence and ſeek his face, he will be not a Surgeon to repair, but as a Lion to rend and tear thee. Only return, and there is an open remedy. *He that hath torn will heal thee, he that hath ſmitten will bind thee up:* Hoſ. 5. 13, 14, 15. & 6. 1, 2.

(2) Believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *Act.* 16.

16. 30, 31. *i.e.* Receive him in all his Offices, and with all his inconveniencies, and reſt on him as the Lord thy righteouſneſs. Never think that relief is poſſible by any other means. There is not Salvation in any other. There are two negatives in the *Greek*, οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἄλλῳ οὐδενὶ, &c. *Act.* 4. 12. But lo he is able to ſave to the utmoſt thoſe that come unto God by him. His very ſtripes are healing. He is both *medicus & medicina* too. Not a broken heart, but he can ſet and heal it. He immediately made her ſtraight, that had been infirm and bound together for Eighteen years: *Heb.* 7.25. *Iſa.* 53. 5. *Luk.* 4. 18. *c.* 13. 11, 12, 13. And he is as willing as able. He invites, yea intreats poor ſin-ſick Souls to come in, and he will cure them for nothing; only requireth that they come, *Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt:* Rev. 22. 17. 2 Cor. 5.20. Mat. 11.28. Why do not our Souls anſwer with the Church? *Behold we come.* And atteſt him with *Peter? Lord, to whom ſhall we go? thou haſt the words of eternal life?* Joh. 3.22. Joh. 6.68. Hear thou diſtreſſed Conſcience the Maſter calleth for thee. *The whole need not a Phyſician, but they that are ſick. I came to call not the righteous but ſiners to repentance.* Think not thou ſhalt be too bold when the Phyſician bids thee. 'Tis a ſinful baſhfulneſs that ſtays thee from believing on Chriſt, when he bids you to lay all your heart-troubles at his bleſſed feet in believing. *Let not your hearts be troubled——believe in me*, Mar. 2.17. 1 Joh. 3.23. Joh. 14. 1. Come then thou wounded Con-

Conſcience, cloſe with Chriſt, and commit the cure into his hand, who is anointed with a fulneſs of the Spirit for this very purpoſe. Canſt thou but touch his garment by faith, thou ſhalt be whole. *To him give all the Prophets witneſs, that through his name whoſoever believeth in him ſhall receive remiſſion of ſins*, Iſa. 61. 1. Mat. 9. 21, 22. Act. 10. 43.

Direct. 8. Aſſay Conſcience ever and anon with ſome Cordials, and do not add more Corroſives when thy caſe is ſo ſad already. *They were pricked in their heart*, Act. 2. & 16. and the Apoſtles would not have them abide one minute without a plaiſter. How many a Soul is ready to ſwoon away under the Surgeons hand! For their ſakes I ſubjoyn this direction. Say not thy bones are dried, thy hope is loſt, thou art cut off for thy part. Think rather, 1. Of others deliverances, who have been as greatly diſtreſſed. Cannot God open your graves, and cauſe you to come up out of your graves, and breathe life even into your dead Souls, as well as theirs? *Ezek.* 37. 11, 12, 13, 5, 6. Have not you read of ſuch whoſe Couches did ſwim with tears, who have complained their wounds did ſtink, and in whom the arrows of the Almighty ſtuck faſt? that have lookt on themſelves as laid in the loweſt pit, in darkneſs, and in the deeps; that have been diſtracted with terrors, and roared by reaſon of the diſquietneſs of their heart? That have ſaid their ſtrength and their hope was periſhed from

the Lord, while they remembred their affliction and miſery, the gall and wormwood? And yet have theſe been relieved, refreſhed and rejoyced afterward in the loving-kindneſs of the Lord: *Pſal.6.6. & 38.----9. 88. 6. &c. Lam.3.18,19, &c.* What an inſtance was *Paul!* Haſt thou ſmarted like him? was not he a monument of greater ſeverity, that was ſtruck down to the very ground? &c. Or haſt thou ſinned like him, been ſuch a perſecutor, blaſphemer? &c. Howbeit he obtained mercy. And why? but for a pattern to them, *which ſhould hereafter believe in Chriſt to life everlaſting: Act. 9.3,4,6, &c.* 1 *Tim.* 1. 13, 14,16. Say then, Why may not there be mercy for me too, even for me? Is the ſtock of God's mercies ſpent? are they not infinite? *Manaſſeh, Magdalen, &c.* find mercy? And why ſhould I foreſee nothing but miſery? 2. Think of the deliverance tendered thee. The tender is univerſal to all, and therefore to me may Conſcience ſay, *Come unto me all ye that are weary, &c. Whoſoever will let him come, &c. Whoſoever is a thirſt let him drink of the water of life freely.* Say, why ſhould I exclude my ſelf, whom the Scripture, whom my Saviour never excluded? but hath ever invited, as he entertained likewiſe Publicans and Sinners: *Mat.* 11. 28. *Rev.* 22.17. *Iſa.* 55.1. *Joh.7.37.* 'Tis but come, come by faith, come by repentance, and upon the feet of new obedience, and there is comfort for me. The Drawbridge is not up; the door of grace ſtands open to me. 3. Think of thy demerits, and yet

yet what God hath done with thee, and for thee. Hath not every ſin deſerved a death, an hell? How many a death and hell haſt thou then deſerved? And yet thou art alive through his forbearance, and liveſt upon his finding. What reaſon haſt thou then for bleſſing and honouring him, and bearing up of hope in thee? Well, this diſtreſs might have been damnation. Theſe might have been the chains of the blackneſs of darkneſs. I might have been now frying in eaſeleſs and endleſs flames. But he puniſheth me much leſs than I have deſerved. 'Tis of his mercy that I am not conſumed: *Ezra* 9. 14, 15. *Lam.* 3. 22. And why may not he further magnifie his mercy in ſaving me, who hath ſo far magnified it already in ſparing me? He that hath reprieved me, that was under the ſentence of death, may alſo pardon me if I do but preſs him with petitions, and purſue my petitions with repentance. 4. Think of the deſign of this preſent diſpenſation. He hath me in the furnace of affliction; but it may be not to conſume me, but to cleanſe and purifie me, to caſt me into the precious mould of his pure and holy mind and will, which in his word is revealed to me. He breaketh up the fallow ground of my heart, but 'tis to ſow me with the ſeeds of righteouſneſs. And were there no plowing and harrowing, I could expect no harveſt. But of this before, *Direction* 1.

Direct. 9. Attend thy Cure with patience, and do not too haſtily preſs after com-

fort. Thou art in the hands of a moſt wiſe and gracious Phyſician, who knoweth how to time his Cordials to thy conſtitution and temper, and will do it. Do not limit his Eternity to thy time, his infinſteneſs to thy meaſure. Thoſe, *Act.* 2. & 16. enquire what courſe they would preſcribe them to take, not what comfort they could preſently tender them. And the Apoſtles let them know that Conſcience muſt firſt attend the duties of repentance and faith, ere it could arrive to a delicious rejoycing in God's favour. This is thy time to be getting of grace; let God take his time for giving of peace. The effect of righteouſneſs will be peace. Ply thy work and wait patiently. He is a God of judgment, that knows beſt when and how to order out his bleſſings. *Bleſſed are all they that wait for him.* You never knew that it went ill with any ſuch as waited on him: *Iſa.* 32. 17. c. 30. 18. *Pſal.* 33. 20, 21. & 40. 1. I do not blame the ſeeking of peace and comfort, ſo it be ſubmiſſive and ordinate. But would have you, 1. Stay God's time for it. The fruit of the lips, (peace, peace,) muſt have time to ripen. It will but beget crudities, if if you eat it raw. Early joys are none of the ſafeſt enjoyments. Thoſe hearers that anon received Word with joy were by and by offended, when the heat of tribulation did once ariſe for the Word's ſake. 'Tis good to hear till God ſhall ſpeak peace: *Heb.* 6. 4, 5. *Mat.* 13. 20, 21. *Pſal.* 85. 8. 2. And to ſet grace above, and ſeek grace beyond it. This is of ab-

abſolute neceſſity to you, to your very being; that is neceſſary but to your better being. God hath never ſaid, he will not ſave you without peace; but he will not, cannot ſave you with accord to his honour, his holineſs, without grace: *Heb.*12.14. 1 *Cor.*6.9. Beſides, it will argue better for you. Natural Conſcience will put you upon endeavors for peace. 'Tis an enlightned Conſcience that puts you upon endeavours for grace. And 'tis an home (at leaſt an hopeful) evidence of ſaving illumination, when you do prefer grace in your endeavours to peace, and that you love it for its own comelineſs, and not only in order to your quiet. 3. To ſtay the galling anxieties and vexations, anhilations of your hearts for and after it. Cutting and corroding cares even for this are faulty. You ſhould make known your caſe to God in prayer, and caſt theſe cares into the lap of his Providence, continuing in the means which he hath preſcribed you, and ſo peace will come in his appointed time, which is the moſt acceptable and advantageous time: *Phil.* 4. 6, 7. *Hab.*2.3. Othervviſe you expoſe your ſelf to the artifices of Satan, vvho vvill ſoon abuſe your eagerneſs to his ends; either dravving you off from your vvork in the failer and vvant of peace, or dravving you into his vviles in a falſe and ungrounded peace.

Q. 6. *How may we obtain a peaceable or ſound peace of Conſcience?*

The Premiſſes, (*Queſt.* 5.) are of pertinent conſideration. Here likewiſe I only add,

Direct. 1. Affect thy heart (not only with the poſſibility of peace after all theſe perplexities, of which before but) with the preciouſneſs of this peace *. This will excite and engage endeavours. 'Tis a peace that the world cannot give, nor would the Soul that ſenſeth it give it for the whole world. 'Tis the peace of God, a peace in Chriſt, the peace of Chriſt. 'Tis for the truth and tranſcendency of it, called peace, peace: *Joh.* 14. 27. *Phil.* 4. 7. *Joh.* 16. 33. *Iſa.* 57. 19. Of what an excellency muſt this Peace needs be? which is produced by no lower power than the bleſſed God, he creats it; is procured by no lower price than the blood of God, who was crucified for it? is proclaimed by no lower perſons than the Bleſſed Angels, they celebrate it? *Iſa.* 57. 19. *Col.* 1. 20. *Luk.* 2. 14. What a peace that can graſp Heaven into the heart of him that hath it, and make an Heaven upon earth? and in any place can behold a Paradiſe, and God his portion? *Pſal.* 16. 5, *&c. Joh.* 16. 22. Why ſhould thy Soul ſit down in ſadneſs? Here is a feaſt, a continual feaſt *. Thou mayſt come with the Wedding-garment on, and welcome: *Prov.* 15. 15. Here mayſt thou eat of the hidden manna, and have given thee the white ſtone, and in the ſtone a new name written

* See *Jenkins* on *Jude*, verſ. 2.

* See *Dykes good Conſcience* c. 13 p. 18. to p. 201.

written, which no man knoweth but he that receiveth it. Eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, nor can it enter into the heart of man to conceive what is here prepared. This peace paſſeth all underſtanding. 'Tis ſo ſweet, ſo ſignal, ſo ſurpaſſing: *Rev.* 2. 17. 1 *Cor.* 2. 9. *Phil.* 4. 7. Wert thou but poſſeſt of this peace, thou might'ſt look on Satan, as not only diſarm'd but deſtroy'd; on Sin, not only as diſabled but deſtroyed; on Sufferings, not only as not harmful but advantageous and helpful; on the ſentence of the law and ſeverities of God not only as ſatisfied for thee, but as ſweetned to thee: *Eph.* 2. 15. *Rom.* 6. 16. *c.* 8. 33. *to the end.* Thou might look on death and not be diſcouraged. Thou ſhalt depart in peace. Look on the grave and hell, and not be diſmayed. Thou ſhalt enter into peace. Look up to Heaven, and there ſee nothing but reſt and peace, reſt from work, at leaſt from wearineſs as well as reſt from wars: *Luk.* 2. 29. *Iſa.* 57. 2 *Luk.* 19. 38. *Rev.* 14. 13.

Direct. 2. Haſten thy beſt attempts for the prerequiſite of Peace, *Purity.* Conſcience is firſt pure, then peaceable, as hath been ſaid. The goodneſs of Security is founded upon the goodneſs of Sincerity. 'Tis true, Conſcience may be Evangelically purified, yet not pacified. But 'tis as true, never was Conſcience Evangelically pacified, but it was firſt Evangelically purified. Of this before. An impure Soul muſt expect the ſame return from Conſcience to all his meſſengers enquiries for peace, which *Jehu* returned *Joram*'s meſſengers.

gers. *Turn thee behind me, what haſt thou to do with peace?* 2 King. 9. 17, 18, 19.

Direct. 3. Abandon all thoſe ways and means which made and maintained the war between God and thy Soul, Conſcience is God's Officer. The war it maketh and manageth is by his commiſſion, and in his cauſe to revenge thine injuries done him, to return thee to thy duty to him, and in both to right him in point of dignity with thee. And never think it can give thee peace from him, while thou goes on in ways of oppoſition to him, or that thou ſhalt feel quietneſs while thou followeſt theſe courſes: *Job* 15. 20. & 20. 20. *Iſa.* 48. 22. (1) Abandon every ſin. Acknowledg all, away with all, hate and abhor all. One *Achan* is enough to trouble the whole Camp. One *Jonas* to bring a tempeſt upon the whole Ship. The breach of one article as to a league-peace, is as effectual to cauſe and continue a war, as if all were broken. Thou muſt hate every falſe way then, away with all iniquity. The allowance of one ſin ſpeaks an heart for all ſin. And God accounts him guilty of all, who knowingly gives his approbation to any: *Pſal.* 119. 104, 128. *Hoſ.* 14. 2. *Jam.* 2. 10. *Ezek.* 18, 10, 13. Every ſin is an enterprize of war againſt both God and thy own Soul: *Rom.* 7. 23. 1 *Pet.* 2. 11. And never imagin Conſcience can from God proclaim peace, while corruption proclaimeth war againſt God and Conſcience. (2) Abandon Satan. He is the Prince and Captain-general under whoſe Banner Sinners fight, both

againſt

againſt the Goſpel of Peace, and the God of Peace to their own perdition, but at his pleaſure: *Joh.* 12.31. *Rev.* 12.7. 2 *Cor.* 3, 4. Thou muſt quit his Kingdom, come off his Camp, caſt off his Colours, not only caſhier thy ſelf from his Army, but convert thy arms againſt him, and chuſe Chriſt henceforth to be thy only King and Captain, who is the Prince of Peace. So ſhalt thou receive the forgiveneſs of thy ſins, *and an inheritance among them that are ſanctified:* *Epheſ.* 2. 2. 2 *Tim.* 2. 26. *Epheſ.* 6. 11, 12. *Act.* 26.18. Never think thou canſt be at peace with Heaven, while thou art at peace with Hell, and under its power. There muſt be a war with Satan, if peace of Soul *. (3) Abandon ſenſual things, not the ſimple uſe but the ſinful abuſe of them, to a war with Heaven, and to the wounding of your own hearts. Whoſoever will be a friend of the world is an enemy of God: *Jam.* 4. 4. Yea, and to his own good; piercing himſelf thorough with many ſorrows: 1 *Tim.* 6. 10. He that dotes on Earth bids defiance to Heaven, and the God of Heaven to him, and is but driving of nails and thorns into his own heart: 1 *Joh.* 2. 15, 16. *Mat.* 6. 24. *c.* 13. 22. Be vigilant in the uſe, and flee the abuſe of worldly things then. *Take heed to your ſelves, leſt at any time your hearts be overcharged with any of them:* Luk. 21.34. Be ſure, Conſcience will not give them peace that give her nothing elſe but pain, and give the world an higher place than to the God of Conſcience.

* *Pax noſtra bellum contra Satanam.* Tert. ad Mart.

Direct.

Direct. 4. Accept the terms of Peace, which free Grace tenders thee; yet the White-flag is hanging out, God is willing to a peace, and that thou hath ſhouldſt not periſh. Lo! he proclaimed it in his Scriptures, preached it by his Son, publiſhed it by his Angels, and is ſtill praying and perſwading it by his Ambaſſadours: 2 *Pet.* 3. 9. *Iſa.* 52. 7. *Act.* 10. 36. *Luk.* 2. 14. 2 *Cor.* 5. 20. Durſt thou contend with Omnipotency? or why doſt thou not deſire conditions of peace? yea, he offers thee conditions, conditions of the higheſt honour and ſecurity; which if thou ſhalt ſincerely own, thou art ſure of peace and felicity. *Let him take hold of my ſtrength that he may make peace with me, and he ſhall make peace with me:* Luk. 14. 32. Iſa. 27. 4, 5. Canſt thou yet bid defiance? or be at a longer diſtance? Oh! if thou didſt but know in this thy day the things which belong to thy peace! How equal! how eaſie! how excellent are the terms! But the tender of them is of no effect, unleſs thou embrace and take them up; except it be to render thy ſufferings more eaſleſs, and thy ſelf more excuſeleſs. Nor will Conſcience as being Gods Herald, ceaſe denouncing the terrors of war, while thou continueſt defying his terms of peace. But accept theſe, and he will accept thee, and Conſcience alſo ſhall acquit thee as from him: *Ezek.* 20. 40, 41. *Rom.* 14. 18. *Iſa.* 60. 7. *Shall I take my bread, and my water, and my fleſh* (may Conſcience ſay) *and give it unto men whom I know not where they be?* 1 Sam. 25. 11. She expects an anſwer of peace

peace with *Moſes*, and whether thou wilt open thy City-gates at her approach, and cordially embrace the Covenant of Peace ſhe offers thee: *Deut.* 20. 10, 11, *Ezek.* 34. 25, *&c.* *c.* 37. 26, *&c.* Every article of this Covenant muſt find thy acceptance and conſent, or the tenders of grace can take no effect in peace; for 'tis an immutable Covenant, founded upon an immutable Counſel. God will not, cannot lie, to indulge thee any one luſt: *Heb.* 13. 20. *c.* 6. 17, 18. Thou muſt repent of all thy iniquities, be renewed in all thy faculties, be ready to all duties, receive Chriſt in all his Offices, reſign up all to his command and diſpoſe, refer all to God as thy higheſt end and happineſs, and reciprocate with him in all, taking all his to be alſo thy friends or enemies. *So ſhall thy peace be as a river, and thy righteouſneſs like a mighty ſtream. I create the fruit of the lips; peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, ſaith the Lord, and I will heal him:* Ezek. 18. 30. Epheſ. 4. 23, 24. Tit. 3. 1. Joh. 1. 12. Luk. 14. 26. 1 Cor. 10. 31. Pſal. 139. 21, 22. Iſa. 66. 12. *c.* 57. 19. In ſhort then, wilt thou ſubſcribe and ſeal over to God the conditions of the new and better Covenant? Wilt thou henceforth lay down thy arms? give him thy allegiance? put all thou art and haſt into the hands of his Government for his diſpoſal as well as defenſe? Wilt thou henceforth take himſelf for thy chiefeſt good, and abſolute happineſs? Wilt thou take his Son, (and therewith take up his Croſs?) to be thy Prince as well as Saviour, the Lord thy Righte-

Righteouſneſs? And wilt thou take his Spirit henceforth to mortifie thy fleſh, and to manage thy faculties, as may beſt accord with the praiſe of God, and with the power of Godlineſs? I doubt not to ſay, that God hath now guided thy feet into the way of peace: *Iſa.* 44. 5. *Rom.* 6. 13. *Pſal.* 17. 15. *Jer.* 33. 16. *Rom.* 8. 13, 14. *Luk.* 1. 79. But it is requiſite perhaps that I be a little more particular. Well then,

Direct. 5. Apply thy ſelf to the Lord of peace, and the Lord of peace unto thy ſelf. There is no peace with God, nor peace of Conſcience, but by Jeſus Chriſt. This is the *Blaſtus* whom you muſt make your friend, if you mean to find peace: 2 *Cor.* 5. 18, 19. *Act.* 10. 36. *c.* 12. 20. Peace is of his manifeſting, his meriting, his making.

(1) This peace is of his manifeſting and publiſhing. Men are naturally at a loſs in the means of peace. The way of peace have they not known. Nor had the Angels known it, but by the Church. Nor had the Church known it, but by Chriſt: *Rom.* 3. 17. *Eph.* 3. 10. *c.* 2. 17. 'Tis he that hath reveal'd and opened this hidden myſtery, how God might be fully righted, and manfully, yet freely reconciled in his Goſpel, which is therefore called the Goſpel of peace: *Act.* 10. 36. *Rom.* 16. 25, 26. *c.* 10. 15. See then that you apply your ſelf to and attend on him, in the conſcionable reading and hearing of his Goſpel; wherein he hath given forth both the Covenant and Conditions of Peace. But remember that you

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ſit not down with this, that he hath therein opened theſe things to your underſtandings, but be a reſtleſs ſolicitor till he hath opened your underſtandings alſo to theſe things, and given you an inward ſenſe and taſte of the Truths ſpoken to: *Luk.*24. 45. *cum* 32. *Phil.* 1. 9. For Chriſt is anointed with ability and authority, not only (as other Prophets) to preach peace to you, but (as being the great Prophet) to preach peace into you. Or (if you will rather) to preach you into a ſtate of peace, and that you may have peace in him the Preacher, and his peace in you: *Iſa.*61. 1. *Luk.*4.18. *Joh.*16.33. *c.* 15.11.

(2) 'Tis of his merit and procurement. *The chaſtiſement, or puniſhment* (as the *Dutch* render it) *of our peace was upon him*, Iſa.53.5. It would not conſiſt with the ſovereign pleaſure and perfections to make peace with us, without ſome puniſhment or propitiation from or for us. There muſt be a price, ſome compenſation, or there could be no peace, no reconciliation. Now Chriſt undertaketh to recompence God, and reconcile man. And lo! he hath born the puniſhment, laid down the price, and ſo bought out peace by the Blood of his Croſs, for all that ſhall believe in him, that he may bring them nigh to God, and God unto them: *Dan.* 9. 24. *Rom.*3.25. *Eph.* 2. 13,----17. *Col.* 1.20,21. 1 *Pet.* 2.24. *c.*3.18. And now what is behind, but faith in his blood? An active faith on thy part, whereby thou maiſt accept and appropriate himſelf for thine, and apply the blood of his Croſs

to

to thee, would alleviate thy troubles, and afford tranquility: *Rom.* 3.25. *c.* 1, 9, 10. *c.* 8. 34. You have the blood of ſprinkling, that ſpeaks better things than the blood of *Abel*; better things to God for you, and better things from God to you. But remember 'tis the hand of faith muſt ſprinkle this blood on the Conſcience. According to your faith ſo will it be to you, either peace or perplexity: 1 *Pet.* 1. 2. *Heb.* 12.24. *c.* 10.22. *Mat.* 9. 29. Get you but faith to dip in this blood, and ſtrike the lintels of Conſcience therewith, as the *Jews* did the lintels and ſide-poſts of their houſes, there's no fear of the deſtroyer. Faith in his blood gives a full *quietus eſt* from the fears that generate bondage, and gives you boldneſs to enter into the holieſt: *Exod.*12.22, 23. *Rom.*8.15. *Heb.*10.19.

(3) 'Tis of his making and applying too. 'Tis 1. of his free donation, as being the Prince of Peace, and that hath the key of *David*, *who openeth and no man ſhutteth, and ſhutteth and no man openeth:* Joh.14.27. Iſa.9.6. *Rev.* 3. 7. And 2. by vertue of his Dominion. There is no peace with God or Conſcience, while you perſiſt in your contumacy, and continue under the power of Sin and Satan. Theſe muſt be dethroned in and for you, and you muſt be delivered from their power, and muſt deliver up your ſelves to be his people, ere God can, without injury to his honour, his holineſs, declare himſelf to be at peace with you: *Iſa.* 59. 8. *Rev.* 2. 17. *Pſal.*85.8. Now 'tis Chriſt that muſt ſave you out of the hands of your enemies,

enemies, ſlay the enmity in your hearts, and ſubdue your ſtubborn wills to the ſubjection and will of God, by the ſtrong but ſweet ducture of his omnipotent grace: *Luk.* 1. 69, 71. *Rom.* 8. 7. *cum* 9. *Iſa.* 55. 5. *Cant.* 1. 4. As ever you would come at peace then, you muſt by faith cloſe with him as your Prince. Peace is annexed to his Principality: *Iſa.* 9. 6, 7. Let him govern and be your Prince, and it will not be long ere he give you peace. His Kingdom conſiſts in righteouſneſs and peace. Only remember 'tis firſt righteouſneſs, then peace. Firſt King of Righteouſneſs, and after that alſo King of *Salem*, which is King of Peace. He firſt frameth the hearts of his Subjects to Piety, then to Peace: *Rom.* 14. 17. *Heb.* 7. 2.

Direct. 6. Acquaint thy ſelf with the God of Peace. Hitherto thou haſt been alienated, and an enemy in thy mind to him by wicked works; and thou canſt not expect he ſhould be otherwiſe to thee till thou return and art reconciled: *Col.* 1. 21. *Rom.* 5. 10. 'Tis high time to be upon better terms with God, or thou wilt be upon worſe terms ere long with Conſcience. Acquaint now thy ſelf with him, and be at peace. Now is the accepted time, if you will yet delay or dally, Conſcience will uſe a rougher dialect, and this thy day of peace will end in the darkneſs of amazing pangs and gripes of Conſcience: *Job* 22. 21. 2 *Cor.* 6. 2. *Luk.* 19. 41, 42. Seeſt thou not how willing God is to an accord? or he would not invite thee to this acquaintance,

and

and ſo ſolemnly ſwear it, that he hath no pleaſure in thy death, and even pray thee out of this diſtance, and project ſuch means that his baniſhed may not be expelled from him: *Ezek.* 33. 11. 2 Sam. 14. 14. If God be ſo willing, why ſhouldſt thou be ſo wayward? Draw nigh to him, and he will draw nigh to thee. He is as willing to be friends as you are, or can be: *Jam.* 4. 8. Do you ask me how ſhall we get acquaintance? I anſwer (1) You muſt be habituated for ſuch an high converſe. You may never look for acquaintance with God, ſo long as you are alienated from the life of God. Senſe doth not capacitate the brute Creatures for converſe with men; nor will reaſon ſimply capacitate men for converſe with God. Reaſon fits for converſe with men; but 'tis Religion muſt fit us for converſe with God. Without his image there is no intercourſe. *Adam* had no ſooner loſt that, but he loſt this alſo. The godly hath he ſet apart for himſelf: *Epheſ.* 4. 18. *Iſa.* 28. 12. 2 *Cor.* 3. 18. *Gen.* 3. 8, *&c.* *Pſal.* 4. 3. (2) You muſt accord all controverſies. For how can you be acquainted, while you are not yet agreed? *Am.* 3. 3. To this end you muſt not only ceaſe provoking; but ſue out your pardon, ſubmit to his Propoſitions, and ſolicite him by prayer: *Exod.* 34. 9. *Pſal.* 81. 15. *Job* 33. 26, 27, 28. (3) You muſt apply your ſelves to his company in the uſe of thoſe appointments, or ordinances, whereto he hath annexed the promiſe of his own preſence. There is no acquaintance with him, without approaching

ching to him. *Then ſhall we know if we follow on to know the Lord:* Hoſ. 6. 1,2,3. There muſt be no hiding then through guilt, among the trees of the garden. No turning away back, now that God hath opened thine ear. Thou muſt be like thoſe in the Prophet, *They ſhall go and ſeek the Lord their God. They ſhall ask the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward, ſaying, come and let us joyn our ſelves to the Lord, &c.* Gen. 3. 8. Iſa. 50. 5. Jer. 50. 4, 5. *Who is this that engageth his heart to approach unto me? ſaith the Lord.* He requires it, *Seek ye my face*, and you muſt reſolve upon it, *thy face Lord (I muſt and) I will ſeek.* 'Tis good for you, and God hath annexed his ſpecial promiſe to to it: *Jer.* 30. 21. *Pſal.* 27. 8. *&* 73. 28. (4) There muſt be an hearty conjunction with him. For of what avail is acquaintance, as long as the heart hangs looſe in our converſes? Your heart muſt be knit, and cleave unto him, as *Jonathan*'s did unto *David: Pſal.* 86. 11. *Act.* 11. 23. 1 *Sam.* 18. 1. What acquaintance with omniſcience, while your hearts ſtand off? and God is near in your mouth but far from your reins? *Behold he deſireth truth in the inward parts. He ſearcheth the heart, and trieth the reins.* And if thy heart be not right with him thy other applications will be reckoned flattery, not friendſhip: *Jer.* 12. 2, 3. *Pſal.* 51. 6. *Jer.* 17. 10. *Pſal.* 78. 7, 36, 37. 1 *Chron.* 28. 9. (5) Be actually and often communicating thy ſelf to him. If you will hide your heart from him, what hopes of acquaintance with him? He that in-

tends acquaintance ſhould be emptying and unboſoming his heart to him, and making him partaker of his ſecrets. Pour out your heart before him, then eſpecially in Prayers and Supplications. Preſent him your particular caſes and concernments. Hide nothing from him, from whom indeed nothing is hidden. Let all thy pangs of ſorrow have vent, like *Hannahs* in the pouring out of thy Soul. It may be when thou art pouring out thy caſe he may be pouring in his comforts: *Pſal.* 62. 8. & 32. 5. & 38. 9. 1 *Sam.* 1. 15. Prayer hath the promiſe of his Preſence, and indeed of peace. *In every thing by prayer and ſupplication, let your requeſts be made known unto God. And the peace of God ſhall keep your hearts, &c.* Pſal. 145. 18. Job 33. 26. Phil. 4. 6, 7. (6) Add to all this an affectionate correſpondence and communion with him. Acquaintance doth not barely note an intereſt in another, but intimacy, but endearedneſs, (at leaſt) intercourſe with that other. I would have you ſecure an intereſt in him, that thou be able with *Thomas* to ſay, *My Lord and my God.* This will ſerve thee in with choice peace, in that this God is the God of peace: *Pſal.* 16. 2. *Joh.* 20. 28. 1 *Theſ.* 5. 23. But I would not have you think it enough to have obtain'd an intereſt in him, but you ſhould maintain an holy open intercourſe with him; for herein lieth the crop and confluence of Evangelical peace; and it is the end for which one whole Epiſtle was written: 1 *Joh.* 1. 3, 4. Oh! what a calm and ſerenity of Conſcience do ſuch holy converſes

verſes of faith, love, &c. breathe forth! What a conflux of joy are they bleſſed with! Who ever came down from this Mount, but his face ſhone with the irradiations of Divine love? Or did not ſay of being on this Mount as *Peter* of being on that, *Mat.* 17. *'Tis good for us to be here, let us build Tabernacles, &c.* Iſa. 26. 3. *Exod.* 34. 29, 30. *Pſal.* 65. 4. & 36. 7, 8, 9. *Mat.* 17. 4.

Direct. 7. Argue this ſtate and aſcertain it to Conſcience if thou wouldſt arrive to peace: Adjure her throughout all her proceedings or argumentations, and articulate converſes about it to be plain and full with thee, as ever thou wouldſt attain to a ſound and well-ſetled peace. Peace of Conſcience is not the birth of raſh and precipitate conjectures at an adventure, but of rational and pondering ſelf-converſes and arguings, by comparing a mans ſelf with the ſigns or marks which the Scriptures give him for judging his eſtate and condition. *Hereby know we that we are of the truth, and ſhall aſſure our hearts* * (or as the Syriack, *make our hearts quiet*) *before him. Hereby we know that we know him,* (viz. *to be our advocate with the father, and that he is the propitiation for our ſins,* (*and therefore our peace*) *if we keep his commandments,* 1 Joh. 3. 18, 19. c. 2. 1, 2, 3. Call Conſcience to attend its office, for clearing thy eſtate, and charge it to be open and down-right with thee, in the diſcharge of every part as it proceedeth in way of ratiocination and diſcourſe. It proceeds as I have ſaid in a practical Syllogiſm. As thus,

* *Inde fit ut pacatam conſcientiam habeamus.* Bez. Annot. ad loc.

To be ſpiritually minded is life and peace.
But I am ſpiritually mind; do mind ſpiritual Objects firſt and fulleſt.

Ergo, *I have life and peace.*

Adjure hereby the living God, to tell thee nothing but the truth, in all the parts of her diſcourſe. Let artificial Logick be found only among Scholars; yet is there natural Logick in every mans Conſcience, as one * well obſerveth. Charge her before God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt to be clear and impartial with thee throughout. In the firſt Propoſition; adjure her not to give thee unſound marks on the one hand, as a very hypocrite may have; nor unſafe marks on the other hand, as are only to be had, where there is height or growth in grace; and are therefore improper in the preſent caſe, which concerns only the truth of grace. In the ſecond Propoſition, adjure her to be full and faithful with thee in her teſtimony. Wilt thou ſay this before the all-ſeeing God for me? Wilt thou ſpeak it to thy ſuperiour, as well as to my ſelf? Canſt thou ſay, *Behold my witneſs is in heaven, and my record is on high?* Pſal. 139. 1, 23, 24. *Job.* 21. 17. *Job* 16. 19. In the third Propoſition, urge her to ſpeak home, and ſpeak out, as ſhe will anſwer it to God the ſupream Judg. Give her no reſt, if ſhe either ſuſpends her ſentence, or is ſhort in it, till ſhe ſaith, *Shibboleth* plainly and roundly, that ye may bring things to ſome certainty, as they did: *Job* 16. 30. 2 *Tim.* 1. 12. 1 *Job.* 2. 5. See this fully proſecuted, Q. 3.

* *Fenners Treat. of Conſcienc. p.* 231, 232.

Direct.

Direct. 8. Attend the ſpirit of peace. Spiritual peace is an effect of pouring out the ſpirit upon us: *Iſa.* 32. 15, 16, 17. Not as if it did exclude the efficiency of Father, or Son. 'Tis both from him and them: *Rev.* 1. 4, 5. It was through the eternal Spirit, that Chriſt offered his ſpotleſs blood to purge, and therewith pacifie the Conſcience from dead works. It is the ſame eternal Spirit that mouldeth us into the myſtical union with Chriſt, maketh application of his blood to the Conſcience, and manifeſts the ſame to its peace and comfort: *Heb.* 9. 14. 1 *Cor.* 12. 13. *Tit.* 3. 5, 6, 7. Abuſe not the Spirit then, but attend his work upon thee, his ways before thee, and his witneſs in and with thee.

(1) Attend his work upon thee. What he is doing, what he is demanding, and with what deſignes*. See thou do not baffle with, or break from him. Quench none of his motions, be they never ſo ſtrict, or ſeem they never ſo ſevere. They all tend to grace, they all end in peace. And though he be as yet a ſpirit of bondage to fear; it is not to exulcerate Conſcience more ſharply, but to heal it the more ſoundly, and that he may be a ſpirit of adoption to thee, whereby thou maiſt cry, *Abba, father:* 1 Theſ. 5. 19. Iſa. 61. 1. Rom. 8. 15.

* *See Ford's ſpir. of bond. c.* 10, 11.

(2) Attend his ways before thee; not only his ways in the Sanctuary, without thee, in the means of grace, as praying, hearing, *&c.* but his ways that are more ſpiritual within thee, in the motions of grace and minding of

Spiritual and gracious matters. The leſs ſpiritual-mindedneſs, the leſs ſerenity of mind. What bluſtrings are there here beneath? But above 'tis all in an happy tranquility. There are no tempeſts or thundrings in the upper region. Call up thy Conſcience and its Colleagues thither, and keep them converſant about ſpiritual and heavenly Objects; and thou ſhalt then ſoon know what is the communion of the Spirit, and what theſe ſuavities of Conſcience are. To be carnally minded is death; but to be ſpiritually is life and peace: *Phil.* 3. 20, 21. *cum* 18, 19. *Col.* 1. 9, 10. *Rom.* 8. 5, 6.

(3) Attend the witneſs of the Spirit in and with thee. It is the Spirit that beareth witneſs, ſaith the Apoſtle: 1 *Joh.* 5.6. Which he doth not only externally in the Scriptures, but internally to and with our ſpirits. συμμαρτυρεῖ τῷ πνεύματι ἡμῶν. *Rom.* 8. 16. A ſingle witneſs under the law was of no moment, *But at the mouth of two witneſſes ſhall the matter be eſtabliſhed*, Deut. 19. 15. Jo. 8. 17. Lo, two witneſſes are tendered upon the caſe to clear it. God's ſpirit and our ſpirit, both of them needful and uſeful to teſtifie the things of God and the things of man. *For what man knoweth the things of man ſaue the ſpirit of man which is in him? Even ſo the things of God knoweth no man but the ſpirit of God:* 1 Cor. 3. 11. The ſpirit witneſſeth to and with our ſpirit or Conſcience, in and throughout its whole argumentation and progreſs, whereupon it

it concludeth its peace. *E. g.*

All thoſe that with child-like appretiation, affiance and affections can cry, Abba, father, are the children of God.

But I can with a child-like appretiation, affiance and affections cry Abba, father.

Therefore I am a child of God: Rom.8.15,16.

The Spirit witneſſeth with my Spirit. 1. To the truth of the Propoſition, by an internal manifeſtation or revelation of that truth to the mind, whereof he hath already made an outward revelation in the Scriptures: *Joh.*14.26. *Pſal.*119.18. 2. To the truth of the Aſſumption, by irradiating the Conſcience, and enabling her in and upon the reflections ſhe maketh to apprehend, feel and deſcry ſuch appretiations and affections in me, or whatſoever other mark or *medium* I am making uſe of, to clear up my eſtate thereby: *Eph.*1. 17, 18. 1 *Cor.* 2. 12, 14. 3. To the truth of the Concluſion, not only by ſtrengthning her to conclude my ſtate and condition, from ſuch appretiations and affections, but by ſhedding abroad ſuch beams of joy and comfort, as confirm me therein, and ſeal it up unto my ſoul: 1 *Cor.* 2. 9, 10. *Rom.* 5. 5. *Eph.* 1. 13. c. 4. 30. Though you muſt not attend for an external audible teſtimony from the Spirit *, which was never promiſed, and hardly (if ever) pattern'd; Yet you may and muſt attend for the internal and effectual teſtimony of the Spirit, in effecting, exciting, heightning and evidencing of his own graces to

* See *Hollingw. Hol. Ghoſt on the bench.* p. 74, 75. *Ball's Life of Faith,* p. 79.

and in you, and in the effuſion of the love of God and of his joy upon you, which is called the joy in and of the Holy Ghoſt, and is the companion of peace of Conſcience: *Rom.* 14. 17. 1 *Theſ.* 1. 5, 6. Let me only add, Thou muſt not expect as if the Spirit would, or could, witneſs peace to thee, before it hath wrought grace in thee. For its teſtifying peace to the Conſcience is by teſtifying the truth of thy grace, and cloſing with Chriſt. Thou muſt firſt ſet thy ſeal to the truth of God in the reception of his teſtimony by faith in his Son, ere the Spirit of truth will ſeal thee up to the day of redemption: *Joh.* 3. 33. *cum Eph.* 4. 30. *&* 2 *Cor.* 1. 22. *In whom after that ye believed* †, *ye were ſealed with the holy ſpirit of promiſe*, Epheſ. 1. 13.

* *Quaſi dicat, non citiùs, nec ante, ſed poſt fidem in Chriſtum.* Zanch. ad loc.

Thus appealing Conſcience into, and adjuring her by the divine preſence will be of notable advantage. It will not only awaken and engage Conſcience, but will awe her from extreams, to which Sin and Satan may otherwiſe incline her, and put the more authority and undeniableneſs into her teſtimony and ſentence, as being given not only upon God's commiſſion, but with God's conteſtation and comprobation; and ſo will be the more powerful to arreſt and ſtay ſcruples, to anticipate or anſwer Satan, and aſcertain the Soul in the ſweeteſt and ſteadieſt affiance, while the teſtimony and judgment of Conſcience to a mans righteouſneſs and reconciliation, *&c.* is after ſuch ſeverities, and as in the ſight of God.

And

And her language to the Soul is like that of *Eliphaz* to *Job*, *Lo this, we have ſearched it, ſo it is, hear it, and know thou it for thy good*, Pſal. 17. 2, 3. & 7. 3, 9, 10. & 26. 1, 2, 3. Job 13. 15, 16. c. 23. 10. c. 27. 2, 5, 6. c. 5. 27.

Q. 7. *How may we keep Peace of Conſcience when once gotten?*

The former Directions, C. 2. Q. 7. and thoſe even now given you, Q. 7. are of uſeful review here likewiſe *. But I ſhall be particular.

* See *Fenners Treat. of Conſc. p.* 200, &c.

Direct. 1. Keep out ſin. This is THE make-bate, and like a mad man, it caſteth firebrands, arrows and death. Her entrance and firſt embraces (its true) may promiſe a mellifluous ſweetneſs. But her end is bitter as wormwood, ſharp as a two-edged ſword, that pierceth even to the Conſcience. And if anothers abuſe of his liberty may wound your Conſcience, much more will the ardour of your own luſts: *Prov.* 26. 19. c. 3, 4. *Rom.* 6. 21. 1 *Cor.* 8. 12. *Pſal.* 38. 3, 5. Keep out eſpecially (1) Scandalous ſins. Theſe fly at God and his glory. His name is blaſphemed through them; and ſhall you be bleſſed in them? *Had Zimri peace who ſlew his maſter?* Though *David* was the darling of Divine Providence, yet farewell his peace when he once fell into ſuch a provocation: 2 *Sam.* 12. 14. 2 *King.* 9. 31. *Pſal.* 51. 8, 11. (2) Self-condemned ſins. Think not to ſin againſt Conſcience, and yet ſin in quiet. Such ſins are a daring of Conſcience to do its

its worſt, and do implicitely condemn her, as ſhe doth explicitely condemn them. And how can ſhe in ſuch a circumſtance acquit and clear? Remember what it came to in *Peter*, how his bleſſed peace was exchanged into bitter pangs. And indeed ſuch perſons carry their condemnatory ſentence in their own boſom till it be reverſed by repentance: *Rom.* 1. 32. *c.* 2. 1. *Mat.* 26. 75. *Rom.* 14. 22. *Titus* 3. 11.

Direct. 2. Keep off Satan. Thy peace is his pain. The more thou enjoyeſt, the more he envieth. *Job*'s tranquility was Satan's trouble, *Job* 1. *&* *C.* 2. And he doth not only afflict him in his goods, but accuſe him to his God. There is no impreſſion (it is true) can be made by him upon the God of peace, he is immutable; but there may be on the peace of God, for this is mutable in it ſelf, and in a mutable Subject: *Numb.* 23. 19. *Jer.* 14. 19. *c.* 16. 5. You have ſeen the firſt league of peace violated through his temptation. And if you are not the more circumſpect he will fruſtrate the ſecond, as to the ſweets and ſerenities thereof to your Souls, by feeding your thoughts with tribulations, or flattering you to tranſgreſſions. Be ſober, be vigilant, your adverſary the Devil is not at reſt, becauſe you are in peace. The ſenſe of your happineſs ſtirs up the more activity and aſſiduouſneſs. *As a roaring lion he walketh about ſeeking whom he may devour,* καταπίῃ, *Swallow up or drink down.* 'Tis not long ſince he would have ſwallowed thee up with over-much ſorrow.

Look

Look to it, for he is deſigning the ſame end, though (it may be) diverſifying in the means. If he cannot cut off the Covenant of peace, yet he will clog the peace of the Covenant in whatſoever he can. Stand upon your guard then, ſet out your centinels, gird on your ſpiritual armour, keep the ſhield of faith in your hand. Give no place, but reſiſt him ſtedfaſtly, *and the God of peace will (not only bind, but) bruiſe him under your feet ſhortly*, 1 Pet. 5. 8, 9. 2 Cor. 2. 7. *cum* 11. Eph. 6. 11,---17. *c.* 4. 27. Jam. 4. 7. Rom. 16. 20.

Direct. 3. Keep down Secular things. They are (like fire) of place and profit in the hearth, but of greateſt peril when they get abroad, and get up into the houſe. Its objects they are for the ſenſitive part, they relieve, refreſh it; but not for the rational part, they diſappoint, diſtract, divide it, and are not only vanity but vexation of ſpirit, *Eccleſ.* 1. 14, *&c.* Though they may feaſt Concupiſcence, they will vex the Conſcience, if you let them come too nigh it. 'Tis between Conſcience and the Creatures, as between the Children of *Iſrael* and the *Canaanites*. As theſe get up, they come down. Are theſe high? they are as low. If theſe be the head, they are the tail: *Deut.* 28. 43, 44. He that would ſecure the peace of his Conſcience muſt keep theſe *Canaanites* under, and make them ſervants and tributaries. He muſt not ſet his heart (but his heel) upon them. He may not lift up his Soul to vanity. He muſt not love the world though he may live in it. But ſhould have his converſation

verſation in heaven, if he would have this heaven in his Conſcience: *Pſal.*62.10. & 24. 4. 1 *Joh.* 2. 15, 16. *Phil.* 3. 20. Take heed to your ſpirits then, keep this world under your feet, and the other world in the eye of your faith. Let not the lean kine devour the fat, Secular proſperity Spiritual peace. *Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth*: *Mal.* 2. 15. *Gen.* 41. 20. *Coloſſ.* 3. 2.

Direct. 4. Keep up your Society and Communion with the God of peace. The marrow and kernel of peace of Conſcience conſiſts moſtly in this. Conſcience cannot lift up an hand againſt you, while he lifts up the light of his countenance upon you; and nothing but your ſins can hinder theſe ſhines. The Lord is with you while you are with him. *Surely his ſalvation is nigh them that fear him*, Pſal. 4. 6, *cum* 8. 2 Chron. 15. 2. Pſal. 85. 9. Your danger then is in being behind with him; doubtleſs he will not be behind with you; you ſee that he is ready, be not you remiſs, either in receiving in or retaining of thoſe acts of communion which are offered on his part to you, or in returning thereto and reciprocating with him therein, by thoſe acts of Communion which you owe on your part to him.

(1) Be ſtill ready to receive and take in whatever further demonſtrations of his kindneſs for, and reconciliation to you he ſhall yet tender thee. He comes not without his myrrh and his ſpices, his honey-comb, and his

his honey. See that divine Loves find you not ſnoring upon your beds, but ſtirring about your buſineſs, and ſeeking your beloved. *He meeteth him that rejoyceth and worketh righteouſneſs, thoſe that remember him in his ways.* If you'l ſleep away ſuch opportunities, or ſlight his overtures, the very watchmen will wound and ſmite you. You cannot put off his preſence but you therewith put off your own peace: *Cant.* 5. 1,----8. *c.* 2. 1,----4. *Iſa.* 64. 5. Look to your receptive capacities, that they be not prepoſſeſſed, or unprepared. The Lamb's wife had no ſooner made her ſelf ready, but ſhe had the grant of other raiment. While *David*'s heart was ready, it was at reſt. And *if thou prepare thine heart*, thou mayſt preſerve it from anxieties. *Then ſhalt thou lift up thy face without ſpot, yea, thou ſhalt be ſtedfaſt, and ſhalt not fear:* Rev. 19. 7, 8. Pſal. 57. 7. *cum Marg.* Job 11. 13, 15.

(2) Be ſure thou reſerve with thee and repeat often to thee what former diſcoveries of his loving kindneſs he hath left with thee. Review often the evidences he hath ſhewn, and the experiences thou haſt ſens'd of his love to thee. This will ſtrengthen faith, ſilence fear, ſpeaketh forgiveneſs, and ſatisfieth the Soul as with marrow and fatneſs. *We have known and believed* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *the love that God hath to us.* Hereupon their Souls dwell in love; yea, in God, and God in them, and they neither dread law, or death, nor hell, or judgment: *Pſal.* 63. 5. & 26. 3. & 36. 7, 8. 1 *Joh.* 4. 16, 17, 18. What holy

holy challenges may the Soul now bid to all, and every one of them! yea, what an happy conqueſt is it ſure of over them! Their united ſtrength can never overthrow his peace, while he liveth under the ſweet rayes of divine love, and is looking on ſo many pecifick pledges of an omnipotent well-pleaſedneſs. And as long as he can look upon him as the God of love, he can live upon him alſo as the God of peace: *Rom.* 8. 35. *ad finem*, 2 *Cor.* 13. 11.

(3) Be ſerious and ſpeedy in thy returns to him, leſt thy delay cauſe his with-drawing: *Cant.* 5.7. Summon up every faculty to attend his coming, and anſwer his loving kindneſs, with the higheſt joys and thankfulneſs. His loving kindneſs is better than life, therefore heart and lip, and life, and all ſhould praiſe him: *Pſal.* 103. 1, 2, 4. & 63. 3. & 138. 2. Now is the time to be giving him your loves, and bringing forth thoſe pleaſant fruits, both new and old, which you have laid up for him. Now it is, that he expects moſt the exerciſe of his graces in you, while he is evidencing his grace to you. He requireth your offerings, and the firſt fruits of you oblations, with all your holy things, and hath promiſed, *I will accept you with your ſweet ſavour*, Cant. 7. 12, 13. *Heb.* 12. 28. *Ezek.* 20. 40, 41. And now God is pleaſed by his own promiſe to undertake for his peoples peace, while they perſiſt in ſuch ways as theſe: *Iſa.* 26. 3. c. 30. 15. c. 32. 17.

(4) Be more ſteady in the reciprocations of love with him. Give him love for love. Are

his

his deſires towards thee? Let thy deſires alſo be towards him. Doth he rejoyce over thee? do thou alſo rejoyce in him: 1 *Joh.* 4. 19. *Pſal.* 33. 1, 21. *Iſa.* 26. 8. *O love the Lord all ye his Saints.* While you live in Love there is an harmony of hearts, and you'l have no leiſure for liſtning after thoſe ſinful avocations, which diſpleaſe God and diſturb the Conſcience. Love will be adhering to and abiding with God, and aſſimilating you to his goodneſs. Beſides love caſts and keeps out tormenting fears, and is of that tranſcending and inexpugnable force, that like death, it beareth down all before it. *Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it,* Pſal. 31. 23. & 5. 11, 12. & 70. 4. 1 Joh. 4. 18. Cant. 8. 6, 7.

Direct. 5. Keep up a ſteady confidence and faith in Chriſt. He was the cauſe, and is the conſervator of Evangelical peace. It was procured by his Death, and is preſerved by his Interceſſion. Herein he doth not only appear in our natures, but for our ſakes, and in our ſteads, as our Agent to preſerve a correſpondence, and prevent controverſies as our Atturney to plead our Cauſe, and promote our Concernments. And whereas every ſin tends to a breach of peace, he takes upon him to accord the difference, and appeaſe juſtice, and he doth it not only by preſenting our petitions for peace, but by pleading the perpetual vertue of his own pacifick ſacrifice, and perſonal ſatisfaction for us: *Heb.* 9. 24. *c.* 6. 20. 1 *Joh.* 2. 1, 2. *Rev.* 8. 2, 3. *Heb.* 9. 7, 12. Now your

your work is to come unto God by him, ſeeing he ever liveth to make Interceſſion for them that thus come: *Heb.* 7. 25. You may neither come in prayer, nor by faith immediately unto God, but through him, in the vertue of his Mediation and Interceſſion: *Eph.* 3. 12. *Col.* 3. 17. 2 *Corinth.* 3. 4. Upon every new breach that your ſin ſeems to make,

(1) Set the principle of faith at work afreſh upon him. An active faith will appropriate and draw the benefits of his Interceſſion into our own chanel. *He is entred by his own blood into the holy place for us. He appeareth in the preſence of God for us*, Heb. 9. 12, 14. It apprehends and eyes Chriſt, as one that is herein about our buſineſs, anſwering our accuſer, accompliſhing our abſolution, according our crimes or charges with divine juſtice, advocating our caſe with the Father, and that we may be accepted before the Lord as one that bearing our names before the Lord upon his two ſhoulders, yea upon his heart, as a memorial before the Lord continually, as the high Prieſt did when he went into the Holy of Holies: *Rev.* 12. 10. *Heb.* 9. 7, 11, *&c.* 1 *Joh.* 2. 1. *Exod.* 28. 12, 29, 38. Yea, an active faith will be able from the influence and efficacy of his Interceſſion, to argue down both inward fears and outward force, whatſoever may ſeem to introduce a charge, or impeach the peace of our Conſciences. She concludes, *Wherefore he is able to ſave to the uttermoſt thoſe that come unto God by him.* And challengeth them to ſpeak, or do their worſt, ſhe is ſo ſecured in

in him. *Who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of Gods elect? Who is he that condemneth? It is Chriſt that died, yea rather that is riſen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who alſo maketh interceſſion for us*, Heb. 7. 25. Rom. 8. 33, 34.

(2) Send up the prayers of faith to him, or rather to God by him. Put thy petitions for preſerving thy peace into his hands, and they are ſure to paſs. He will deliver them, and the Father will not deny him. 'Tis the office he undertaketh, to offer up the prayers of the Saints, and he will therewith offer up his own incenſe: 1 *Joh.* 5. 14, 15. *Joh.* 16. 23. *Rev.* 8. 3. If you would maintain Conſcience, maintain this confidence. His Interceſſion affords you abundant arguments. *Seeing that we have a great High-prieſt that is paſſed into the heavens.-----Let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need*, 1 Joh. 3. 21, 22. Heb. 4. 14, 16.

Direct. 6. Keep cloſe to the Covenant of Peace. Conſcience fetcheth its comforts out of the Covenant of Grace. 'Tis its armory in times of Spiritual war, and its treaſury in times of Spiritual peace: 2 *Sam.* 23. 5. *Heb.* 6. 18. 2 *Cor.* 10. 4. *c.* 4. 7. Learn to be more converſant in it, and keep cloſe to it.

(1) Not only in fulfilling the condition it propoundeth (of which before, Q. 6.) *Though all the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth to ſuch as keep his covenant and his teſtimonies*, 1 Chron. 16. 15, 16, 17. Pſal. 25. 10. & 103. 17, 18.

(2) But by faith in the Promises it contains. Every promise would thus end in peace; for what is the Gospel but a Gospel of peace? Or what are Gospel-truths but the glad tydings of peace? *Abraham* and *Sara* had enough to perplex and intricate them, but faith in the promise kept them immovable and unshaken: *Rom.* 10. 15. *Gal.* 6. 15. *Rom.* 4. 18,----22. *Heb.* 11. 11. God hath laid up immutable grounds of Comfort in his immutable Covenant. If the fruits are mutable, 'tis because our faith is mutable. The Promises are all *Yea* and *Amen*; but our faith is yea and nay. Let faith eye them more steadily, and embrace them more strongly. So did the Patriarks, and they lived and died in peace: *Heb.*6.17,18. *c.* 11, 13.

(3) By frequent views of its perpetuity and continuance. *The mountains indeed shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, nor the Covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee*, Isa. 54. 10. 'Tis a sure Covenant. We have his word, his oath, his seal to confirm it to us, and his own love and faithfulness are lain at pledg for the performance of it: 2 *Sam.* 23. 5. *Psal.* 89. 33, 34, 35. 2 *Cor.* 1. 22. When ever therefore Conscience is ready to misgive thee, call her hither, and mind her of the immutability of Gods Covenant in the mutability of thy condition. Tell her, *Thus saith the Lord, if you can break my Covenant of the day, and my Covenant of the night, that there should not be day and night in their*

their ſeaſon; then may alſo my Covenant be broken with you, Jer. 33. 20, 21. *c.* 31. 35, 36, 37.

Direct. 7. Keep on in the Commandments of God. Keep up duty if you would keep off diſquiet. Peace of Conſcience is preſerved by obedience; not only * as it anticipateth, what would trouble and confound the terms of our peace, but as it affordeth a teſtimony to Conſcience of the truth of our peace. Hereby we know that we know God, and are known and acknowledged by him. Hereby we aſſure our hearts before him: 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. 1 *Joh.* 2. 3, 5. *c.* 3. 19. Yea, God aſſureth the true Evangelical obedience an happy tranquility and peace. The work of righteouſneſs ſhall be peace. Glory, honour and peace to every one that worketh good. *As many as walk according to this rule, peace ſhall be upon them*, Iſa. 32. 17. Rom. 2. 10. Gal. 6. 16. I adviſe eſpecially that you preſerve 1. Loving affections. The more you love his precepts, the more you ſhall live in peace. *Great peace have they which love thy law*, Pſal. 119. 165, 166, 167, 132. 2. Loyal aims. Let the preponderating motive be to pleaſe the Lord, that you walk worthy of him unto all pleaſing. And he will reciprocate with you. Every thing ſhall work together to pleaſure you; your enemies ſhall be at peace with you, God himſelf ſhall take pleaſure in you. And therefore Conſcience muſt needs be at peace with you. No teſtimony ſpeaks that peace to Conſcience as this, that I pleaſe God: 2 *Tim.* 2. 4.

* See Fenner's *Treat. of Conſc.* p. 205, &c.

Col. 1.10. *Rom.*8. 28. *Prov.* 16. 7. *Pſal.*149.4. *Heb.* 11. 5.

Direct. 8. In ſhort, keep a foot conſideration, and your moſt awakened and active circumſpection. Look backward and conſider your pangs and plaints ere it came, your prayers and promiſes that it might come, the price you then ſet upon it, the pains you then ſpent for it, *&c.* Look forward, and conſider the end it pointeth at, the effects it promiſeth, the enjoyments to which it prediſpoſeth, *&c.* Look upward, and conſider the principle whence it cometh, the price which it coſt, the proprieties and priviledges which it cleareth, *&c.* Look downward, and conſider not only others horrors, but how ominous, hopeleſs, *&c.* your thoughts of hell and of the grave would be if you ſhould loſe your peace. You cannot miſs of motives, whither ſoever you convert your minds. In a word, loſe this, and you loſe all. God, Glory, Heaven, Happineſs, though not as to themſelves, yet as to your ſenſe. Keep this and you keep all, the ſweets, the ſecurity of all. Nay, if you keep not this you cannot keep your ſelves at leaſt in any quiet and compoſure. For 'tis the peace of God that keeps your hearts and minds, all your rational faculties: *Phil.* 4. 7. Keep thy heart therefore with all diligence. Be diligent that you may be found of God in peace, without ſpot and blameleſs. Watch thou in all things: *Prov.* 4.23. 2 *Pet.* 3. 14. 2 *Tim.* 4. 5. Watch the adverſaries of Conſcience, that they neither flatter her out of

of her peace, or fright her with their power; neither feed her with prejudice, nor force her upon any precipice, that they neither cauſe an invaſion, nor cheriſh an inſurrection. Watch the acts of Conſcience, both imperate, which ſhe injoyneth other powers of the Soul, and elicit which iſſue immediately from her ſelf, that they neither decline the rule, nor diſcontinue their exerciſe, nor be diſtorted to either extream, but be diſcharged regularly. Watch her anſwers, that they be the anſwers of a good Conſcience toward God. In fine, watch every avenue, that nothing paſs in or out but what you can give a good account for, to the God of peace: *Mat.* 26. 41. 1 *Cor.*16.13. c. 8.9. *Hebr.* 3. 12. 1 *Pet.* 3. 21. *Luk.* 21..34, 36.

Q. 8. *Whether a pious Chriſtian may not live for ſome time without Peace of Conſcience?*

Doubtleſs he may. For though we may admit Piety to be the practical foundation of Peace; yet we muſt allow ſome time between laying the foundation and raiſing up the frame or building. 'Tis true, the end of that man is peace, but his entrance is moſt times perplex, as *Manaſſehs*, *Ephraims*, the Jews and Jaylors was: *Pſal.* 37. 37. 2 *Chron.*33.12,*&c. Jer.*31. 18,*&c. Act.* 2. 37, *&c. c.* 16. 29, *&c.* It is plain (1) there can be no peace before grace, Q. 1.) 'Tis firſt grace, then peace, in all the options of the Apoſtle: *Rom.* 1. 7. 2 *Cor.*1.2. (2) There is and muſt be grace in order of

time and nature before peace. For the true peace of a gracious Christian ariseth from the testimony of Conscience to the truth of his grace. So that Conscience in pronouncing peace doth always presuppose grace, and maketh use of the truth of our grace, as a *medium* whereby it proveth that we are upon terms of peace: 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. *Isa.* 26. 12. *Psal.* 4. 8. (3) There may be a considerable interval between the implanting of grace in us, and the imparting of peace to us, whether we consider the ground of peace, or the giver of peace. 1. The ground of peace. The immediate rise of peace is not the simple existence of grace in us, but the sense and evidence of this grace to us. And it is manifest that grace may exist in that subject, which hath no evidence or sense of it, and that for a long time. Witness *Heman*, *David*, *&c.* 'Tis one thing to know God, 'tis another to know that we know him. This is the product usually of much time, many thoughts and trials of our selves. Christ tells his Disciples, *Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. But* Thomas *saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?* There is no contradiction. They knew it, but did not know that they knew it, notwithstanding so long continuance with him. Science there was, at least a dark and confused knowledg; but not Conscience, no distinctness or clearness of knowledg, though they had so long converse with him, in whom were laid up the treasures of wisdom and knowledg: *Psal.* 88.

3, 9,

3, 9, 15. *c.* 42.3.----8. 1 *Joh.* 2.3. *Joh.* 14.4,5.

2. Let the giver of peace be conſidered. Grace and peace are from the ſame Spirit. But not at the ſame time, or with the ſame circumſtances. 'Tis the ſame ſpirit that ſanctifieth us in the day of our renovation, and that ſealeth us up to the day of our redemption. But it is not by the ſame act. That is antecedaneous, this afterward. *After ye believed ye were ſealed with that holy ſpirit of promiſe*, Iſa. 32. 15, 17. *Rom.* 15. 13, 16. *Epheſ.* 1. 13. How long, or how little time he will take, ere the enſealing of the deed, is not for us to determine, while he hath not declared it in his word, and is pleaſed to diverſifie ſo much in his works. *Pauls* peace was not ſo early as *Lydias* was. 'Tis not for us to know the times and ſeaſons which the Father hath put in his own power: *Act.* 9. 9, 17, 18. *c.* 16. 14. 1. 7. This is certain, Grace is from the Spirit, as working out ſin, and writing out the ſimilitude of God upon the Soul. Peace is from him, as witneſſing with our ſpirits our Sonſhip and Salvation. So that as he firſt worketh, then witneſſeth; ſo there is uſually ſome diſtance of time, between this and that. And his witneſſing that we are the Sons of God, doth ever preſuppoſe that work, as every act doth preſuppoſe its object: *Rom.* 8. 15, 16. Beſides, the Spirit doth not evidence or witneſs the truth of grace to us, but in and by the exerciſe of grace, as it is at work in us. *The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace, in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power*

of the Holy Ghost, Rom. 15. 13. Now as grace must be before it works, so the works and exercise of grace are seldom of that eminence as to amount to an evidence of the truth of grace till time hath given us some taste and trial of them, in iterated and renewed acts. (4) A pious Christian may live for a long time without peace of Conscience then as appears by the premisses. Grace it self is called the inward and hidden man of the heart, and like the Souls in-being in the body, is not known *à priori* from its causes, but *à posteriori* from its effects: 1 *Pet.* 3. 4. 2 *Cor.* 4. 16. *Col.* 1. 6. Admit that these effects are discernable, yet are they not actually, and so efficaciously discerned as to assure peace, without the concurrence of a twofold witness, God's Spirit and our Spirits. God's Spirit as being a most free agent, is not obliged to this, or that, or indeed to any time of ours. He bloweth where and when he listeth. Our Spirits are often so dull'd, discomposed, distempered with passions, prejudices, prevailing fears and sorrows, or power of melancholy, *&c.* as they are disenabled to discern, till these are worn out with time and experience. And mean while like *Asaph* and others, the Soul oft-time refuseth to be comforted: *Rom.* 8. 16. *Psal.* 51. 12. *Job.* 3. 8. *Psal.* 77. 2. *Gen.* 37. 35. *Jer.* 31. 15. (5) Hence there is no such inseparable connexion between grace and peace, as a man should disclaim grace, because he is as yet denied peace. 'Tis a weighty saying of that worthy servant of God *, who is now shining in another

* *Love's Grace, Truth, & growth, Serm.* 11. *p.* 148.

another world. Though there cannot be true peace where there is no grace, yet there may be true grace where there is no peace.

Q. 9. *Whether pious Chriſtians may not loſe the peace of their Conſcience?*

No doubt they may, if we underſtand it of peace it ſelf, though they cannot loſe the ſeeds of peace.

(1) They cannot loſe the ſeeds of peace, and in this ſenſe cannot loſe their peace: *i.e.* Seminally and radically conſidered. 'Tis a peace and aſſurance for ever, an everlaſting joy, *a joy that no man taketh from you.* For ever, not in regard of an uninterrupted continuance here; but in regard of its unintermitted cauſes. There is ever cauſe or matter of peace, though there is not ever the conſcience or mercy of peace: *Iſa.* 32.17. *c.* 35.10. *Joh.* 16. 22. 1. Chriſt our peace is the ſame ſtill, the ſame conſidered in himſelf, and as to the conſummating of our Salvation. He will not loſe his intereſt in his Saints; and hath aſſured they ſhall not loſe their intereſt in himſelf. They may forfeit his ſmiles, but ſhall never fall from himſelf: *Heb.* 13. 8. *c.* 5. 9. *Joh.* 6. 37, 39. *c.* 10. 28, 29. 2. The Covenant of peace is the ſame ſtill. 'Tis an everlaſting Covenant, and gives ground of everlaſting comfort. And the propriety of his Saints therein is everlaſting too, though they cannot ever plead it. They may not ever have the comforts of the Covenant, but they ſhall never

ver be cut off or caſt out of Covenant: *Heb.* 13. 20. *Iſa.* 54. 8, 9, 10. *c.* 61. 8. *Jer.* 33. 40. *Heb.* 13. 5.

(2) They may loſe the ſweets of peace, yea peace it ſelf; God himſelf gives evidence to it. Remember how he ſpeaketh to and of his Church. *O thou afflicted, toſſed with tempeſts, and not comforted. I called thee as a woman forſaken and grieved in ſpirit. We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear and not of peace. I have taken away my peace from this people, even loving kindneſs and mercies. I was wroth and ſmote him, I hid me and was wroth, &c.* Iſa. 54. 6, 11. Jer. 30. 5. Iſa. 57. 17. The godly have given us their experience in it too. *Behold, for peace I had great bitterneſs,* ſaith *Hezekiah*, Iſa. 38. 17. *The arrows of the Almighty are within me,* (ſaith *Job*) *the poyſon whereof drinketh up my ſpirit. The terrors of God do ſet themſelves in aray againſt me. Mine hope hath he removed like a tree, he hath alſo kindled his wrath againſt me, and counteth me unto him as one of his enemies, &c. He teareth me in his wrath, he gnaſheth upon me with his teeth, &c.* Job 6. 4. *c.* 19. 10, 11. *c.* 16. 9. What ſhall I tell you of *Heman*, of *Aſaph*, or of *David?* (who yet was of a ſanguine, and therefore chearful Conſtitution, and of ſingular skill both in Muſical inſtruments and ſinging) yet was his and their Souls full of troubles, and you may find them roaring by reaſon of the diſquietneſs of their hearts: *Pſal.* 38. & 88. & 13. & 22. & 27. Peace it ſelf may be removed then, though the ſeeds of peace remain

main. In that thoſe ſeeds are now hidden from ſenſe, and they do not immediately bring forth the bleſſed fruits of peace, without the intervening act and atteſtation of God's Spirit and ours (as was ſaid Q. 8.) without which a mans intereſt in Chriſt and the Covenant will be always dark, moſt times doubtful, and many times denied: *Iſa.*40.27. *Pſal.* 31.22. *c.* 88.14. Now God's Spirit may and many times doth ſuſpend his teſtimony, and ſtand off as a ſtranger, or as a wayfaring man; yea, ſmite and wound, and write bitter things againſt the Soul. Our ſpirits may and do with-hold their witneſs many times alſo; either careleſs through oſcitancy, or confuſed in their obſervations, or complicated by other objects, or compreſſed in their own operations, through doubts which depreſs them, through diffidence which diſquiets them, through diſtracting cares and fears which deſolate them. So that our ſpirits may not only be oppoſite to peace, but overwhelmed with perplexities: *Pſal.*30.7. *Jer.*14.8. *Pſal.*69.26. *Job.* 13.26, 27. *Pſal.* 25.17. & 77. 2, 3. & 143.4.

(3) Hence Chriſtians ſhould not meaſure their grace by their peace. Neither 1. as to the ſincerity of it. There is not any ſuch infallible tye between them as that a man ſhould throw off all his hopes of grace, as ſoon as he is turn'd out of the hold of peace! Their tenure is different; Grace is a tenure for perpetuity; but Peace is a tenancy at will, *ad placitum domini.* We hold both from God, and

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of meer grace or favour. But that we hold more abſolutely. God hath undertaken both parts of the Covenant, that we ſhall not depart from him, as well as that he will not depart from us. This (ſee peace) we hold more arbitrarily, and are at our good behaviour in it. If we break his ſtatutes, he will break our comforts, though he will not break his Covenant: 1 *Pet.* 5. 10. 2 *Cor.* 1. 3. *Jer.* 32.39,40. *Iſa.* 59. 21. *Pſal.* 89. 31.------35. 2. Beſides, their tendency or reſpect is different. Grace appertaineth to the being of a Saint. Peace to his well-being. A man cannot be a Saint without that; but he may be a Saint, (though ſad) without this. A man doth not ceaſe to be, becauſe he ceaſeth to be well. Sickneſs doth not unman us, though it unmirths us. 2. Neither may we meaſure the ſtrength of grace by our ſweets of peace. *David*, *Job*, *Aſaph*, *Heman* were moſt ſignal inſtances of the life of piety, as well as of the loſs of peace. They were not ſo much below others in this, but they were as much above them in that. The Scriptures do ſufficiently furniſh us with examples of the greateſt works of grace in the greateſt want of peace: *Job* 13.15. *Hab.* 3. 17, 18. *Pſal.* 44.17-----25. But of this more hereafter.

Q. 10. *How may we recover Peace of Conſcience, which we have now loſt, eſpecially our Souls lying in ſo much diſtreſs and perplexity?*

Direct. 1. Take up betimes, and ſuffer not theſe

theſe ſores to root deeper in thee, or run any longer upon thee. I ſay to thee as *Jonathan* to his lad, *Make ſpeed, haſte, ſtay not.* And as the voice to *Paul*, *Make haſte, and get thee quickly out of Hieruſalem*, out of this dark and deplorable condition. Haſten thy eſcape from the fearfulneſs and tremblings, thoſe windy ſtorms and tempeſts that now overwhelm thee: 1 *Sam.* 20. 38. *Act.* 22. 18. *Pſal.* 55. 4,----9.

(1) To this end read over thy loſſes, and let this give life to renewed labours. Haſt thou not loſt the ſight of thy God? the ſweets of thy grace? the ſuavities of Scriptures and Ordinances? and the ſecurities and ſoul-ſatisfactions which thou wert wont to take in thy ſecret and ſolemn offices, and in the delicious views of thy ſanctified habits and faculties? And canſt thou lie ſtill under ſuch ſore loſſes? *Job* 9. 11. *Lam.* 3. 17, 18. *Pſal.* 119. 81, 82.

(2) Ruminate on thy condition, and let this quicken thee. Is it a condition only of loſs of thy dear peace? Nay, but a condition of lamentable and deep perplexity. While it may be friends are bewailing, enemies are boaſting or blaſpheming, Satan is tempting, ſin is troubling, and the thoughts of God are a terrour to thee. And is this a condition to be reſted in from day to day? *Job* 19. 21. *Pſal.* 69. 20, 26. 2 *Cor.* 2. 11. *Pſal.* 38. 3, 6. *Job* 30. 15, 16.

(3) Reflect on thy caſe yet more diſtinctly, and let this diſabuſe and excite thee. In all other troubles thou haſt thy ſelf to befriend thee.

thee. But in this caſe when Conſcience is ſmiting and accuſing, thy ſelf will be engaged againſt thee, thine own Soul will diſquiet, and perhaps diſtract thee. Conſcience will call in all againſt thee; the Affections to awaken and arm their fears, cares, ſorrows, *&c.* the Memory to account and ſum up thy tranſgreſſions which trifled away thy joys, both in themſelves, and in their circumſtances; thy Underſtanding to aggravate both thy tranſgreſſions and troubles, and to anſwer whatſoever is tendered to reduce her to tranquility: *Job* 30. 15, 16. *Pſal.* 42. 5. *&* 55. 4, 5. *&* 40. 12. *&* 22. 14, *&c.*

(4) Reckon with thy ſelf what it will come to if thou continue thus, and thereby call forth and raiſe up endeavour. Thou art going down-hill apace, and muſt expect without an early anticipation, to degenerate from bad to worſe; from one ſorrow to another; from caſting down to diſquiet, and from thence to diſtraction; from troubles of Conſcience to terrours, and from terrours to horrours; yea, and from one ſin to another; from oſcitancy to obduracy, and from thence to obſtinacy; from deſpondence to diffidence, and from thence happily to deſpair: *Pſal.* 42. 11, *&* 88. 15, 16. *&* 55. 3. *Heb.* 3. 12, 13. *Pſal.* 73. 13, *&c.*

(5) Recall thy paſt comforts, and let theſe conſtrain thee to mend thy pace. Canſt thou forget thoſe halcyon days, and happy diſcoveries of divine grace to and in thee? when thou heard'ſt nothing but the ſweet ſounds of peace, either from within or without thee?

like

like that of *Amaſai* to *David*, *Peace, peace, be unto thee, and peace be to thine helpers.* How canſt thou but caſt back a wiſh with *Job* thither, and quicken thee to thy work? *O that I were as in months paſt, as in the days when God preſerved me! when his candle ſhined upon my head, and by his light I walked through darkneſs, and his ſecret was upon my tabernacle,* 1 Chron. 12. 18. Job 29. 2,----7.

Direct. 2. Try over thy condition by an even ballance. 'Tis poſſible you may have miſtaken your caſe, and thence miſs your comforts, as the *Pſalmiſt* did; a further trial may ſet the former right: *Pſal.* 77. 10. & 71. 22. *Prov.* 13. 7.

(1) Try the cauſe. Whatever be the cauſes from which, to be ſure ſin is the cauſe for which theſe ſad concuſſions are fallen upon thee. God afflicteth not willingly. 'Tis our iniquity doth (in a ſort) inforce him to it. Haſt thou not procured this unto thy ſelf? *Yea, thy way and thy doings have procured theſe things unto thee, this is thy wickedneſs, becauſe it is bitter, becauſe it reacheth unto thine heart:* Pſal. 38. 3, 4. Lam. 3. 33. Jer. 30. 14. c. 2. 17, 19. c. 4. 18. Seek out the *Jonah*, that ſpecial ſin for which this ſtorm is ſent; let it not lie ſleeping by the ſides of the Ship, while you are ready to ſink or ſplit. Know and ſee wherein hath been this ſin this day. This is not a time ſo much for whining over thy loſſes, as for winnowing off thy luſts; not ſo much for ſighing out thy complaints, as for ſearching out thy corruptions. The Church is not for ſitting

ſitting down and telling over her woes, but for ſearching and trying of her ways in ſuch a condition as this: 1 *Sam.* 14. 38. *Pſal.*77. 6. *Lam.* 3. 39, 40. Yea, beg God to ſearch thee, and ſhew thee that ſin which hath made ſo ſad a breach. Leave thy complaint upon thy ſelf with *Job:* charge not God fooliſhly; Crave his diſcovery. *Shew me wherefore thou contendeſt with me. Make me to know my tranſgreſſion and my ſin,* Pſal. 139.23. Job 10. 1, 2. c.13. 23.

(2) The life of Grace is an hidden life; hidden not only in Chriſt, but oft-times from the Conſcience. But then like the treaſure, which the Goſpel tells you of, 'tis hidden for your ſearch, though it be hidden from your ſight: *Col.* 3. 3. 1 *Pet.* 3. 4. *Mat.* 13.41. *Prov.* 2. 4. Would you dig to the bottom, who knoweth but you might deſcry this treaſure, and defeat the tentation that is now upon you? I acknowledg that it is none of the happieſt ſeaſons, for trial of the truth of your Sanctification, but diligence herein may overcome the difficulties hereof. *My ſpirit made diligent ſearch,* ſaith *Aſaph,* when his ſtate was as arduous and afflicted as yours: *Pſal.*77.6. You may find enough to ſupport hope, if not to ſatisfie your heart. And though you ſee little ſmoke, and ſenſleſs heat and warmth of grace, yet a ſtrict ſearch may diſcover ſome ſpark or other, in ſo many embers which you ſhould do well to ſearch for and ſtir up: *Pſal.* 119. 81. *Luk.* 24. 16. *cum* 22. 2 *Cor.* 13. 5. 2 *Tim.* 1. 6. Let me ask you or come anſwer theſe

few

few queſtions in this afflicted condition. 1. What are your greateſt deſires? are they not to the name of God, and to the remembrance of him? Oh if God would lift up the light of his Countenance! If I might have but ſome glimpſes of his loving-kindneſs! &c. Muſt not all Comforts, all Creatures ſtand by in compariſon of this? Is not this the one thing thou deſireſt afore and above all the reſt? Muſt thou not ſay, *My ſoul thirſteth for God, for the living God, when ſhall I come and appear before God?* Iſa. 26. 8. Pſal. 4. 6. *cum* 8. 73. 25. *cum* 21. & 27. 4. & 42. 2. 2. What is your greateſt diſplicence? Is it not that God hideth his face, and holds thee for his enemy? either that he is diſpleaſed with thee, or that he is departed from thee? Is not this the gall and the wormwood that moſt embitters this cup to thee! that the Lord hath forſaken thee, thy God hath forgotten thee? thy beloved hath withdrawn himſelf, and is gone from thee? Oh the felicities I have found in his favour! the overcoming ſweetneſs that hath overflown me in his ſervice! *&c. When I remember theſe things I pour out my ſoul in me, and my tears are my meat, while they ſay unto me where is thy God?* Job 13. 24. Pſal. 88. 7, 14. Lam. 3. 17, 18, 19. Iſa. 49. 14. *Cant.* 5. 6. Pſal. 42. 3, 4. 3. What are your greateſt deliberations? Are they not how you may return into friendſhip with God, and God may renew his favour to you? How you may be reſtored into acquaintance with him, and be reconciled to and accepted of him? Oh that I knew

where or how I might find him! whom, though I were righteous, yet would I not anſwer, but I would make ſupplication to my Judg. *Oh that I were as in months paſt! when the Almighty was yet with me, and the ſecret of God was upon my tabernacle?* Lam. 5. 21. 2 Cor. 5. 9. Job 23. 3. c. 9. 15. c. 29. 2, 4, 5. 4. What are your greateſt determinations? Are they not for God, the living God? That thou wilt continue endeavours for him, whatever it coſt thee? That thy Soul ſtill follow hard after him, though he ſeems to fly farther from thee? That thou wilt never give over thy work, or his word, though thou ſhouldſt go weeping from day to day, and duty to duty? That whatever work ſit this ſhall not; for thou ſetteſt a value on him above all the world. *O God, thou art my God, early will I ſeek thee. My ſoul thirſteth for thee, my fleſh longeth for thee, &c. I will wait upon the Lord that hideth his face from me. From the ends of the earth will I cry unto thee, yea in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have I waited for thee, and will wait upon thee,* Pſal. 42. 2. & 63. 8. Lam. 2. 18, 19. c. 3. 48, 49, 50. Pſal. 63. 1. & 61. 2. Iſa. 8. 17. c. 26. 8, 9. What doth Conſcience anſwer to theſe queſtions? Muſt they not anſwer in the affirmative? Is not the language of your ſpirits the ſame, much-what with this, that is now ſuggeſted to you? If ſo, how ſhould you cheer your drooping hearts and command off theſe diſquiets and anguiſh. For theſe are juſt evidences that God is yours, and you are his; that the

grace

grace of his Spirit is in you, though the grace of his favour doth not ſhine with its wonted light and warmth upon you, as the Scriptures mentioned do manifeſt; yea, theſe things ſpeak thy appretiation and eſteem of God, as the higheſt good; and thy affections for, and intention of him as the higheſt end, and do therefore more infallibly conclude the ſafety of thy condition, than do many other marks. So that thou maiſt well renew the *Pſalmiſts* charge. *My ſoul wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from him*, Pſal. 62.5.

Direct. 3. Tack about to the cauſe that hath thus bereft thee of thy comforts. Purſue it with all the ſtrength thou canſt make. Draw up every ſquadron of thy Soul like the Stars in their courſes to fight againſt *Siſera*, the ſin that hath invaded and ſpoil'd thy peace. Let thy Underſtanding diſcharge its arguments againſt it, and aggravations of it. Let Conſcience arraign, accuſe, condemn it, and all the other powers, under the ſubjection of Conſcience, execute and exterminate it. Yea, call in Prayer, Promiſes, Providences, and whatever elſe may powerfully help thee in the combate, or to its conqueſt. And be ſure thou give it conſtant chaſe, till thou haſt ſubdued or ſunk it, till thou haſt drawn the nail of ſin out of thy heart, and driven the nail of ſorrow and mortification into its head. Thus did holy *David*, *Pſal.* 51.1.---15. *Judg.* 5. 20,26. *Surely it is meet to be ſaid unto God, I have born chaſtiſement, I will not offend any more. That which I ſee not, teach thou me. If I have done ini-*

quity I will do no more, Job 34. 31, 32.

Direct. 4. Try the bath of Repentance. No Bath is more effectual for an ulcerous body than this is for an ulcerated ſpirit. Repentance is a *panacea*, the Chriſtians all-heal. Whoever repented that was not remedied? No ſooner had *Job* repented but he was reſtored, recovered. Repentance removeth the cauſe, and then God undertaketh to renew our comfort. He will repent of the evil of puniſhing, if once we repent of the evil of provoking. Let *Ephraim* repent, and ſhe is forthwith remembred, received, reconciled, and God reneweth the ſweets of her old relation. *Is* Ephraim *my dear Son? Is he a pleaſant Child? &c.* Iſa. 6. 10. *c.* 57. 18, 19. *Job* 42. 6, &c. *Jer.* 26, 3, 13. *c.* 18. 8. *c.* 31. 19, 20.

(1) Here rip up thy ſins in confeſſion, that have made theſe ſad ruins in Conſcience. Thy ſorrows are continually before thee. Call thy ſins before thee alſo, and declare thine iniquity. The more you cover them, the more they will corrode, and like a cancer gnaw and feed on you. The ſooner you confeſs them, the ſpeedier and ſafer too will be your cure, and Gods comfort: *Pſal.* 38. 17, 18. *Prov.* 28. 13. 1 *Joh.* 1. 9. *David*'s heart was heavy in him, and God's hand was heavy on him. And what doth he? *I acknowledged my ſin*, ſaith he, *&c.* And God by and by acknowledgeth his Soul, and anticipateth his ſupplication. *I ſaid I will confeſs my tranſgreſſion unto the Lord, and thou forgaveſt the iniquity of my ſin.* And he ſets a *Selah* on it, for your attention and obſervation: *Pſal.* 32. 4, 5, 6.

(2)

(2) Rinſe thy Soul in Contrition. Break up the fountains of Evangelical ſorrow, and bathe thy Soul in them. How ſhould thine eyes run down with penitential tears? and thy head with rivers of pious ſorrow? and that heart bleed for thy manifold tranſgreſſions, which is broken with ſuch manifold tribulations? *Lam.* 1. 16. *cum* 18. *c.* 3. 48, 49, 51. *cum* 42. I deny not but thou maiſt deplore the ſadneſs of thy eſtate. *How is the moſt fine Gold changed!* Conſternation fills my heart, the crown is fallen from my head, the joy of my heart ceaſeth! But eſpecially thou muſt deplore the ſignalneſs of thy ſins. *Wo unto me, that I have ſinned.* I will be ſorry for my ſin. *My ſin is ever before me. Againſt thee, thee only have I ſinned, &c.* Lam. 4. 1. *c.* 5. 15, 16, 17. *Pſal.* 38. 18. *&* 51. 3, 4. 'Tis not ſorrow ſimply, but ſorrow for ſin, which is the ſalve for a wounded ſpirit. Yea, this is not only a ſalve to heal but a ſacrifice to expiate: *Pſal.* 41. 4. *&* 51. 17. So that were thy heart more broken for ſin, it would be leſs burdened with ſighing. For this would intereſt God in thy caſe. *The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and ſaveth ſuch as be of a contrite ſpirit.* Nay, this would engage him in the cure. He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds. He undertaketh to cordial and revive them, yea to come down and dwell in them: *Pſal.* 34. 18. *&* 147. 3. *Iſa.* 57. 15.

(3) Return from thy ſins unto the Lord in converſion. Whence are all thy maladies but from turning to them from him? And what

remedy is there without returning to him from them? Lo, this is God's own preſcription, who is the great Phyſician, and hath his promiſe of a cure ſealed up with it, and the Saints *probatum eſt* ſubſcribed to it. Hear how he calls, encourageth, cheareth, quickeneth thee: *Hoſ.* 14. 1,----7. *Jer.*3.1, 12, 13, 14, 22. *Return ye back-ſliding children, and I will heal your back-ſlidings.* When will you ſpeak back to him? Behold we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God, who alone haſt right in us; and art alone able to give reſt to us. The miſery is, men turn into themſelves, or unto ſecond cauſes with *Ephraim*, to be healed of their wound, and then cry out with *Jeremy*, *Why is my pain perpetual? and my wound incurable, which refuſeth to be healed?* And thence complain and fly out even againſt God's faithfulneſs? *Wilt thou be altogether unto me as a lyar, and as waters that fail?* To ſuch ſtrange heights of diffidence do ſuch diverſions ſometimes drive them. But alas, they diſoblige God from comforting them by theſe courſes of theirs, and open a way for ſeverer corrections, while they decline him, and deifie others: *Hoſ.* 5. 13, 14, 15. *Jer.*15.18, 19. *Pſal.*13.1, 2, 3. *&* 77.7,---11. *Come then, and let us return unto the Lord.* There is no recovery of our peace out of his preſence. 'Tis he woundeth, and his hands make whole. Return we hither, and we are ſure to recover. *He hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath ſmitten, and he will bind us up.* We have his promiſe for it: *Hoſ.*6.1, 2. *Zach.*1.3. *Job* 5. 18. *Deut.*4.29, 30, 31.

Direct.

Direct. 5. Take the Balſome that is in the blood of Chriſt. *Is there no balm in Gilead?* Is there no Phyſician there? *Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?* Though there were none there that could heal their civil wounds: *Iſa.* 8. 22. *c.* 46. 11. yet there is enough here to cure thy ſpiritual wounds. For the blood of Jeſus cleanſeth from all ſin, cureth and redeemeth from all iniquity: 1 *Joh.* 1. 7. *Tit.* 2. 14. His blood is the moſt ſovereign confection, and his bleſſed ſelf the moſt skilful Chirurgeon and Phyſitian. No ſore, no ſickneſs ever came amiſs to him. He hath healed infirmities of eighteen, yea of eight and thirty years ſtanding: *Iſa.* 53. 5. *Mar.* 2. 17. *Luk.* 13. 11, 12. *Joh.* 5. 5, *&c.* Yea, he is not only the Phyſician, but the Phyſick, as one ſaith *; and gives himſelf, his own fleſh, his own blood for a purgative, a cordial, a plaiſter to the Soul of his patient. There is no balm for Conſcience like the blood of Chriſt. It both cleanſeth and comforteth. It purgeth her from dead works, and pacifieth her with the living God; and like the tree of life, it is both for meat and for medicine: *Heb.* 9. 14. *c.* 10. 19, 22. *Eph.* 2. 13, 14. *Ezek.* 47. 12. See then that you apply this blood to you, and ſee him applying it for you.

* *D. Reynolds* on *Hoſ.* 14. *Serm.* 4. §. 14.

(1) See that you apply his blood to you. The beſt Balſoms become ineffectual without a befitting application. Conſcience is the part affected, apply this plaiſter cloſe to it. *You are not come to blackneſs and darkneſs, but to the blood of ſprinkling*, Heb. 12. 18, 24. Think

it not enough that Christ's blood might be shed for you, but it must be sprinkled on and by you. The remission of your sins both in it self, and in the sense of it, doth immediately flow from this, not that. We have sinned, and so God is provoked. This is the burden and matter of pain to Conscience. Christ is the propitiation for our sins; this breatheth forth peace to Conscience. But how is he the propitiation for our sins? Through faith in his blood. So that without an intervening act and application of faith, Conscience is not blessed with peace notwithstanding the blood of Christ: 1 *Pet.* 1. 2. 1 *Joh.* 2. 1, 2. *Rom.* 3. 25. Come then and apply this choice and happy Balsom, *the precious blood* (as *Peter* calls it) *of our Lord Jesus Christ*, 1 Pet. 1. 19. Apply, and bring down the vertue of it to thine own case and condition. Oh the advantages of an holy application! which Christ assures us of, under the metaphor of drinking his blood: *Joh.* 6. 54, 55, 56. Accept it then from the hands of thy dear Physician, who to save thy blood, hath shed his own, and hath washed us from our sins in his own blood. Appropriate it especially to the ulcerous and diseased part. Take it for thine own. 'Tis no presumption while the Physician tenders it to thee, and that freely; and tells thee thou must not so much as dream of life, without drinking his blood, (*i.e.* without applying and appropriating it), *Mat.* 20. 28. *Rev.* 5. 9. *c.* 1. 5. *c.* 22. 17. *Joh.* 7. 37. *c.* 6. 53. I allow that there is a difference between the act of the Will in chosing and accepting

accepting of Chriſt for mine, and the act of the Conſcience, whereby I know and am aſſured that he is mine, and I am his. And though the latter be only immediately productive of this peace; yet the former is eminently preparative thereunto, and doth beget an initial and inchoative peace; at leaſt it will baffle many troubles. Go then as far with Conſcience as you can in it, in anſwering her pleas from hence, if you cannot accord all in peace. Doth Conſcience ſuggeſt the foulneſs of thy ſins? ſpeak back again to Conſcience, His blood was ſhed for many, for the remiſſion of ſins, yea and of my ſins; if I am but throughly willing to take him for my Lord and Saviour. Doth Conſcience tell thee of thy ſeveral forfeitures, and ſpiritual vaſſallage to Divine juſtice? Tell Conſcience, his blood hath obtained eternal Redemption; yea there is redemption for me through his blood if I can receive and reſt upon him. Doth Conſcience terrifie thee with being an enemy to God, and God's being an enemy to thee? Tell her the blood of his Croſs hath made reconciliation for the ſins of his people. And for me if I renounce my enmity, and return unto him: *Mat.* 26. 28. *Rom.* 3. 25, 26. *Heb.* 9. 12. *Col.* 1. 14, 20. *Heb.* 2. 17. Oh if Conſcience could but lay a clear claim to this blood, farewell ſuch cramps and convulſions quickly. Could ſhe but ſay, The blood of our Lord Jeſus was ſhed for me, I have redemption through his blood. Now there would be a moſt ample ſerenity. Well, Conſcience cannot

not yet put forth an act of aſſurance after it, yet may ſhe, and ſhould put forth an hand of acceptance towards it, and of an holy acquieſcence on it; as knowing ſin cannot write ſo bitter things againſt us but this blood of ſprinkling ſpeaks better things for us: 1 *Tim.* 1.15. *Iſa.*26.3. *Heb.*12.24.

(2) See Chriſt applying his blood for you, preſenting the merit of it to his Father, and thereby pleading for mercy to the faithful in his Interceſſion. He is not gone into the Holieſt of all, as the high Prieſt with the blood of goats and calves was wont, which he offered for himſelf as well as others. *But by his own blood he is entered into the holy place, and this not for himſelf, but to appear in the preſence of God for us. And if that blood ſprinkling the unclean, ſanctified to the purifying of the fleſh, how much more ſhall this blood ſprinkled in the Conſcience purge it from dead works?* Heb. 9. 7,----15, 24. c. 7. 25.

Direct. 6. Try the Breaſts of the Church, you may ſuck and be ſatisfied. Theſe are breaſts of Conſolation; Breaſts for beauty and benefit, fair and full of milk and nutritive vertue. As the cluſters of the Vine, as cluſters of grapes, full of vinous ſpirits, ſucculency and ſweetneſs: *Iſa.* 66. 11. *Caut.*7. 7, 8. You that are athirſt (*i.e.* in diſtreſs and deſirous of relief) may come freely, Chriſt invites you, encourages, injoyns you to come away: *Iſa.* 55. 1, 2. *Joh.* 7. 37. *Rev.* 21. 6. *Mat.* 11.28.

(1) Try the Breaſts of the Promiſes. Do not put them from you, they are full of affecting

ſting delicacies, and as it were ake for want of drawing. In them is not only ſure but ſtrong conſolation. *For he is faithful who hath promiſed.* Lay but the mouth of faith to the promiſe, as *Sara* and *Abraham* did, and the fears you plead from the improbabilities and ſeeming impoſſibilities of peace will melt away and vaniſh: *Iſa.* 55. 3. *Heb.* 6. 18. *c.* 10. 23. *c.* 11. 11. *Rom.* 4. 19, 20, 21. Sayeſt thou, I ſee no peace of Conſcience within? nothing but puzling calamities without me? But the Promiſes ſhew that there is peace in Chriſt for thee. *In the world ye ſhall have tribulation, but in me ye ſhall have peace,* Joh. 16. 33.

Object. Alas! for peace I have great bitterneſs.

Anſw. Yet hear what God the Lord will ſpeak, for he will ſpeak peace to his people, he will bleſs his people with peace: *Pſal.* 85. 8. *&* 29. 11.

Object. What! I have peace? Alas! I have not deſerved the leaſt peace, but the greateſt puniſhments. 'Tis not all the world can give me peace.

Anſ. But in the Promiſes you have to do with the God of peace. They ask not for deſerts, accept deſires, and afford all of free gift. *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid,* Joh. 14. 27.

Obj. But alas! I ſee no cauſe, no foundation of peace. Matter of provocation God may find enough, and too much in me; but no matter

matter of peace, whence he may educe this bleſſing for me.

Anſ. The Promiſes exhibit peace, as not only of God's cauſing, but of God's creating. And creation is out of no pre-exiſting, or no prediſpoſed matter. *I create the fruits of the lips, peace, peace. I create Hieruſalem a rejoycing, and her people a joy,* Iſa. 57. 19. *c.* 65. 18. Ply theſe and the like promiſes, (as *Phil.* 4. 7. *Iſa.* 26. 3. *c.* 27. 5. *c.* 54. 10. *c.* 57. 16, 17, 18. *c.* 55. 12. *c.* 66, 12, *&c.*) with the ſtrongeſt deſires of their goodneſs, and with your ſteadieſt dependance on their truth. Who ever went to God in the promiſes for peace that went away without the peace of God?

(2) Try the Breaſts of the publick and ſolemn Ordinances. Theſe are full of milk and marrow, and fatneſs, not for ſupport only, but to abundantly ſatisfie us. *Let thine heart preſerve them, and they will add peace to, and preſerve thee,* Pſal. 36. 8. *&* 65. 4. *Prov.* 3. 2, 17. 1. Eſſay the Sacraments; which ſome will have to be thoſe two Breaſts, *Cant.* 4. 5. Certain it is that Chriſt who is our peace, is the internal ſubſtance of them. And he doth not only outwardly ſignifie, but inwardly ſeal righteouſneſs, and therefore peace by them: *Epheſ.* 2. 14. 1 *Cor.* 10. 3, 4. *Rom.* 4. 11. *c.* 14. 17. Reflect on thy Baptiſm. It miniſtreth powerful arguments, not only for the killing of ſin, but for the quieting of the ſoul; as being baptized into Chriſt and under the bond, and therefore having the benefits of the Covenant, thereby confirmed and ſealed. This is another

Ark

Ark againſt the deluge of wrath as *Noah*'s was againſt the deluge of waters: *Rom.* 6.3, 4. *Gal.* 3.26, 27. 1 *Pet.* 3. 20, 21. Renew thy preſence often at and participation in the Supper of the Lord. Here is Bread to ſtrengthen, and Wine alſo that maketh glad the heart of man; the Communion both of the Body and of the Blood of our Lord Chriſt. Lo, here is both a peace-offering for thee, and an offer of peace to thee, under the broad-ſeal of the God of peace. How many Souls have unloaded all their preſſures and ſoul-diſtreſſes at this port? and have gone away loaden, under full ſail, with peace and joy in the Holy Ghoſt? O, let not thy weakneſſes ſo much deter thee hence, as thy wants drive thee hither, and Chriſt's willingneſs to communicate himſelf to his weak believers draw thee, even to thoſe who are filled with troubles of heart: *Pſal.* 104. 15. 1 *Cor.* 10. 16. *Eph.* 5.2. *Cant.* 2. 3, 4, 5. *Joh.* 14. 1, 27. *c.* 16. 6, 22. *cum c.* 13. *Cant.* 5. 1. 2. Eſſay Sermons. The Lord will ſpeak peace. But he is not wont to ſpeak it immediately by himſelf, but through the miniſtry of his own Ordinances and offices, who muſt therefore preach the Goſpel of peace. Yea, he creates peace, but ſo as the word preached is of place and uſe in this Creation, as the word of his power was in the firſt Creation. *I create the fruit of the lips, peace, peace.* The Prieſts lips are to be a ſtorehouſe of comfort, as well as of knowledg. God hath committed to them the Miniſtry of Reconciliation. Nor doth the word they preach only propound the matter of

of peace, but their preaching of the Word is a powerful, and oft-times a present means of peace thorough his benediction: *Psal.* 85. 8. *Rom.*10. 15. *Mal.*2. 5, 6, 7. *Isa.*57. 19. 2 *Cor.*5. 18, 19, 20. *Isa.*40. 1, 2.

Direct. 7. Turn in upon your own bosoms. *Commune with your own hearts*, as *Asaph* did in this very case; *and let your spirits make diligent search*: *Psal.* 4. 4. 77. 6. 'Tis one observation of Dr. *Sibs* on *Psal.* 42. 5. * That one way to raise a dejected Soul is to cite it before it self. You have often heard of the Court of Conscience; see you call and keep it, and convene the troubles of your heart before it. For herein it is that your case must be audited, argued and determined. I wish there were no Christians did carry it to Conscience as *Ahab* to *Micajah*. Either they call not Conscience into the consultations of peace, as afraid she will not prophesie good, but evil concerning them. Or if she comes and deals clearly them, they commit her to prison, and carve out nothing for her but the bread of affliction, till they shall come again in peace: 1 *King.* 22. 8, 27. Whereas there is no sound peace but of Consciences speaking, as hath been abundantly shewn. Arraign your troubles before Conscience then; here audit, here answer, here argue them. For self-communing is one of the speediest and safest ways to stillness and self-quieting: *Psal.* 4. 4. & 42. 5.

* *Soul's Conflict*, c. 5. p. 51.

(1) Audit and require an account of them. 1. Of what kind, or what they are? Are they

they not ſecular troubles? the troubles of ſome Secular emergence and interpoſition? The *Shunemiteſs* hath loſt her Son, and her Soul is vexed within her. By the ſolicitous importunities of *Sampſon*'s Wife was his Soul vexed unto the death: 2 *King.* 4. 27. *Judg.* 16. 16. Or are they not Sickneſs troubles? the troubles of a ſickly indiſpoſition? which oft-times diſcompoſeth the natural ſpirits and faculties, and by reaſon of the Soul's ſympathy with the Body, puts the whole frame in a commotion or combuſtion. Or are they but ſelf-conceived troubles? the troubles of a ſtrong and ſtirring imagination? whoſe falſe and haſty repreſentations do frequently prevent the trial of our judgments, and produce as inſuperable troubles, as if the grounds were real, (witneſs *Jacob*'s imagination of his Son's being ſlain) till they are brought to anſwer it at the Bar of Conſcience and Reaſon: *Gen.* 37. 33,——36. Now though ſuch kind of troubles call for due conſideration of them in their place; yet will they be caſt out of Court as of another cognizance, and of alien and improper conſideration here, when the Queſtion is put touching troubles of Conſcience. 2. From what cauſe, or why are theſe troubles? I intend not hereby the cauſe why God inflicteth them, but why the godly imbrace them. Thus demand a reaſon of them, and deſiſt not till you have brought it to a reſolution. Thus *David* in his diſtreſs doubles and trebles the queſtion. *Why art thou caſt down, O my ſoul? and why art thou diſquieted within me?* Pſal. 42. 5,

42. 5, 11. & 43. 5. Many of your troubles would ceaſe and ſhrink away were they but ſummoned to appear before the Tribunal of Conſcience, as having nothing to ſay for themſelves, eſpecially ſuch as have no ſtronger foundation than your fancy. For ſuch as durſt appear in Court,

(2) Here anſwer them. Chriſtians uſually loſe their peace by liſtning to, and being led by the ſudden pleas of ſenſe, inſtead of laying them in the ſcales of a judicious Diſcourſe. They haſtily admit thoſe pleas as argumentative and concluſive againſt their peace, in private conference, which do require, and would receive an eaſie and adviſed anſwer in publick Court, if Conſcience may deliberately proceed upon them. And it is ſeldom in ſuch a caſe, that they are ever extricated out of their difficulties and diſquiets, till they come to diſcuſs them over again in the Court of Conſcience. And then you have them correcting ſenſe, and chiding themſelves for ſuch indeliberateneſs and precipitancy. *I ſaid in my haſte, &c.* This is my infirmity. Oh that I ſhould be ſo fooliſh and ignorant, *&c. Pſal.* 31. 22. & 77. 10. & 73. 13, 15,——23. *Lam.* 3. 18, 54. *Iſa.* 38. 10, 11. Whatever then are the pleas and pretenſions in impeachment of thy peace, let them be produced in open Court. Let Conſcience conſider and compare them with the rules of the Court, the ſtandard of Evangelical peace. And then how many of thy doubts and troubles will ſucceſſively have *TEKEL* on them? *Thou art weighed in the ballances*,

ballances, and art found wanting, Dan. 5. 27. I forbear to mention here the juſt anſwers may be given to what argument may be happily inſiſted on, wherewith you may furniſh your ſelves in the reſpective caſes.

(3) Here argue it with them. If thou canſt not evince thy peace by it, yet it will eaſe thee in thy perplexities to expoſtulate and argue out the caſe in the Court of Conſcience. How forcible are right words! *David*'s iterated expoſtulations were effectual to the recovery of his dependance, and to the remitting, if not removing of his diſquiets and diffidence: *Job* 6. 25. *Pſal.* 42.5, *&c.* Men are prone to plead it out with Heaven, and reaſon it forth with God. It were the more eaſie and expeditious way to plead it with their own hearts. No arguings unleſs of prayer and faith, being admitable with God. Who is a fit opponent or reſpondent to argue with Omniſcience and Omnipotence? or can chuſe out words to reaſon with him? *Job* 13.3. *c.* 23.4. *c.* 9.14. *Pſal.*77.7,----10. Here argue it then, and bid thy fears as *Job* did his Friends, to attend and liſten. *Hear now my reaſoning, and hearken to the pleading of my lips*, Job 13. 6. Argue 1. from thy paſt ſerenities and ſweetneſſes. Old experiences will become new evidences, *I have conſidered the days of old*, (ſaith *Aſaph*) *the years of ancient times, I call to remembrance my ſong in the night.* And thence he reſolveth that it was his weakneſs (*This is my infirmity*) to yield ſo far to his own deſpondency and diſquiets, and ſhould be his work to devolve

all into the hands of God, and fortifie his dependance on him in the ſenſe of his former happineſs. *I will remember the years of the right hand of the moſt high. I will remember the works of the Lord. Surely I will remember thy wonders of old, &c.* Pſal. 77. 5, ----13. *David's* ſpirit was overwhelmed within him. *My heart within me is deſolate*, ſaith he. And what doth he? *I remember the days of old, &c.* Pſal. 143. 4, 5. God's ancient kindneſſes afford new arguments to Conſcience, whereby ſhe may, and many times doth quiet her ſelf, and confute her ſorrows: *Pſal.* 31. 21, 22. & 71. 18, 20. Well then, if you would not caſt away your confidence, call your former comforts to remembrance. Are your Souls caſt down within you? Revive and cheer them up with the remembrances of God from the land of *Jordan*, and of the *Hermonites*, what he ſpake to you in ſuch a Sermon, ſealed in ſuch a Sacrament, ſecured in ſuch a ſolitarineſs. And thence reaſon with *Manoah's* Wife, *If the Lord would ſlay us, would he have ſhewn us ſuch things as theſe?* Heb. 10. 32, 35. Pſal. 42. 6. Judg. 13. 23. Argue 2. from thy preſent ſuccours and ſupports. Your ſighs are many, and your heart is faint; but the ſeed of peace as well as of grace remaineth. Diſtreſſed you are, but not in deſpair; caſt down, but not utterly, for the Lord upholdeth you with his hand. Whither had Satan, and your own ſins and ſorrows hurried you, if the everlaſting arms had not been under you? *Lam.* 1. 22. *Pſal.* 97. 11. 1 *Joh.* 3. 9. 2 *Cor.* 4. 8. *Pſal.* 37. 24. *Deut.* 33. 27.

Beſides

Beſides, are there not ſome ſecrets hints and intimations now and then ſuggeſted you, that your grounds of peace are better, and God is better pleaſed with you than your prejudices will admit? Your beloved ſtandeth behind the wall, but doth he not look forth ſometimes alſo at the windows and ſhew himſelf through the latteſs? And muſt you not tell him if you would ſpeak truth with the *Pſalmiſt*? *When my ſpirit was overwhelmed within me then thou knewest my path:* Cant. 2. 9. Pſal. 142. 3. Would you hereupon argue it with your ſelves as the *Pſalmiſts* doth, it would cheer and quicken hopes, if not quiet your hearts. He reaſons off his anxious conceptions hereby at one time, and rebukes his haſty concluſions againſt himſelf at another: *Pſal.* 42. 11. & 43. 5. & 31. 22.

Q. 11. *Whether and how far a pious Chriſtian, beſides the loſs of his peace, may be burdened with, and live under great perplexity and diſtreſs of Conſcience?*

No doubt he may if we mind but what is already delivered. The premiſſes on Q. 8. and 9. may ſeem proof enough. But in that the ſighs and ſelf-cenſures of many precious Saints are ſuch as call upon us to behold and ſee, if there were ever any ſorrow like unto their ſorrow. Or if ever under the whole Heaven, hath been done upon any pious Soul as hath been done upon their particular ſelves. I am perſwaded therefore to be more particular *: * See Symond's Deſerted Soul, *cap.* 35, 36.

Lam. 1. 12. *Dan.* 12. 2. I ſay therefore your Conſcience may not only deny you peace, but denounce war, and the dreadfulleſt puniſhments, and yet you may be devoutly pious. Inſtances have been already premiſed, Q. 9. and more will be added in the progreſs of this Diſcourſe. Be it but admitted or granted (which hath been already aſſerted and made good) that a pious Chriſtian may loſe the Evidences of Grace, and may look upon himſelf as in the eſtate of nature, and I need ſay little to confirm the Propoſition that he may be in deep diſtreſs and paſſionate perplexities. Whether Conſcience be conſidered, or the concourſe of other cauſes to afflict him in ſuch a condition as this.

(1) Let Conſcience be conſidered. Your Conſcience was created with a capability of ſuſtaining the evils of ſenſe, as well as the evils of loſs. By her receptive capacity ſhe is diſpoſed to take in the impreſſions of both, and as well to let in the ſenſe of guilt and miſery upon the perpetration of ſin, as the ſenſe of good and felicity upon perſeverance in ſanctity. By its active capacity it is diſpoſed to accuſe and condemn as well as to acquit and clear. Yea the activity of Conſcience doth much further the Chriſtians anguiſh, and ſharpens the ſword in the hand of Conſcience, and doubleth its ſtrokes; eſpecially while unbelief leaves the Conſcience deſtitute of the ſuccours ſhe ſhould receive from Chriſt and the Covenant, *&c.* without her; and lays her naked and deplorably ſubject to her own cutting accuſations

cuſations and killing aggravations of this eſtate without the leaſt reſiſtance from within her. Beſides the authority of Conſcience doth much heighten and haſten on ſuch ſelf-afflictions; while Conſcience is both law and plaintiff, and witneſs, and judg, and executioner, and all this from God. So that if the Soul would in this caſe make its appeal to him, Conſcience doth arreſt and ſtay it. Nay (ſaith ſhe) 'tis God that chargeth, God that condemneth you; I am but his mouth, his officer, *&c.* Yea, hereupon it aggravateth and abetteth the ſadneſs of this Soul's eſtate; If I (that know or can recall ſo few things by you) if your heart condemn you God is greater than your heart, who knoweth all things. So that if the Conſcience of the pious may thus conclude of their eſtate (as hath been premiſed, to be without God and grace, *&c.*) the product muſt needs be calamitous. Diſtreſs of Conſcience is the deepeſt diſtreſs, the bones are dried by it; the ſpirit is broken by it. And *Solomon* puts it to a queſtion, *Who can bear it?* Prov. 17, 22. *c.* 15. 13. *c.* 18. 14.

(2) What a concourſe of other cauſes is there often times, that all wring their wormwood into this bitter cup? Shall I mention and but mention ſome of them.

1. The principal is God. He doth not only hide his face from his, (yet at that the Soul is troubled) but he encreaſeth his frowns, ſharpneth his eyes againſt them, tears them in his wrath, as was *Job*'s caſe, yet a none-ſuch for ſincerity: *Pſal.* 30. 7. *Job* 13. 24. *c.* 16. 9. *c.* 19.

11. 1. 8. He tells his Church, *I have wounded thee with the wound of an enemy, with the chaſtiſement of a cruel one, &c.* He tells others, *I was wroth, and ſmote him, I hid me and was wroth, &c. Jer.* 30. 14. *Iſa.* 57. 17. Oh how muſt this cut the Saint at the heart! and fill his mind with conſternation, and his mouth with complaints! That God his God, on whom he had pitcht all his hopes, in whom he had placed all his happineſs, with whom he had ſometime (as he then thought) ſuch pleaſant intercourſe, and of whom he had ſuch precious experiences! that this God, ſo good, ſo great, ſo deſirable, ſo dear, ſo reſpected, ſo related, *&c.* hath unſheathed his ſword againſt him, or rather ſheathed it in him, and made Conſcience his beſt friend, to become now his bittereſt foe!

2. The procuring cauſe is Sin; which is now ſet forth before the Soul in its nature, number, diſmal, ſequel, dreadful circumſtances, *&c.* which are as Oyl to the flames, and winds to this Sea of troubles, that make Conſcience rage and roar in more abundance. Wo to me that I have ſinned, I am not able to look up. An heavy burden are they, (God is preſſed with them, Chriſt was pierced by them) they are too heavy for me: *Lam.* 5. 16. *Pſal.* 40. 12. *&* 38. 3, 4.

3. The promoting cauſes are ſeveral. Satan roareth as a Lion upon them, and would ſwallow them up in theſe ſorrows, and caſts in his fiery darts to keep up thoſe flames: 1 *Pet.* 5. 8. 2 *Cor.* 2. 7. *cum* 11. *Epheſ.* 6. 16.

Sinners

ſinners either cenſure or ſcoffe at them, which even ſlays the broken in heart. Ay! this is that your religion comes to. I thought you would grow mad, *&c. Pſal.* 109. 16, 25. *&* 69. 26. *Act.* 26. 24. Saints (it may be) either ſtand aloof as ſtrangers, or ſmite with cauſeleſs and cruel cenſures; yea, even good men, great friends, and ſuch as have been of our moſt inward and intimate familiarity, and perhaps of our own family. Which muſt needs add weight to their burdens. Such is the force of relation: *Job* 19. 2, 3, 13,----20, 21, 28. *Pſal.* 88. 8, 18. The ſeaſons and means of grace which tend in their own nature to heal, do now by accident, but exulcerate and pour vinegar into theſe wounds. Oh the means which we have ſlighted and ſinned againſt, if not ſinned with, *&c.* They are hewn by the Prophets, and ſlain by the words of God's mouth: *Hoſ.* 6. 5. Yea mans ſelf, which is in all other exigences his friend and advocate, now falls upon the naked Soul. Every power under the command of Conſcience cloſeth in with her part; to make the wounds thereof yet more wide and ghaſtly, and fetch out the fuller ſtreams of blood: *Pſal.* 38. 3, 6, 7, 8. So then,

(1) Pious Souls may not only loſe their peace but live in perplexities. Yea,

(2) When they look for peace, they may even then be laid hold on by perplexing troubles. *When I looked for good then evil came unto me,* (ſaith *Job*), *and when I waited for light there came darkneſs. My bowels boiled and*

reſted not, the days of affliction prevented me. Your Souls may look up to God, and there is no good; and for the time of healing, and behold trouble. Yea, while you look for light, he may turn it into the ſhadow of death, and make it groſs darkneſs. You may look to the godly, godly men, yea godly Miniſters to take pity on you, but there is none, and to give comfort to you, but you may find none; yea, they may ſmite and wound you, and take away your vail from you: *Job* 30. 26, 27. *Jer.* 14. 19. *c.* 8. 15. *c.* 13. 16. *Pſal.* 69, 20, 21. *Cant.* 5. 7.

(3) When they have but even now lived in peace, they may forthwith be arreſted by ſuch perplexing agonies. *Behold for peace* (or upon my peace, (as *Iſa.* 30. 6.) or after my peace, (as *Jer.* 52. 31.) ſaith *Hezekiah*, *I had great bitterneſs. Like a crane or a ſwallow ſo I did chatter. I did mourn as a Dove, &c.* Iſa. 38. 14, 15, 17. O how quickly may the ſcene of Conſcience and of God's countenance be changed! And that Sun ſet under a cloud, or ſuffer an eclipſe, which ſhone but a little ſince, with ſo much comfort and clearneſs! *David*'s mountain was even now ſo ſtrong by divine favour, that he ſaith, *he ſhall never be moved.* But forthwith God hides his face, and he was troubled. It was not long ſince that *Job* ſaid, *I ſhall die in my neſt, my glory is freſh in me, and my bow is renewed in my hand.* But how ſuddenly are terrours turned upon him? *they purſue his ſoul as the wind, and his welfare paſſeth as a cloud. And now my ſoul is poured out*

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in me, the days of affliction have taken hold upon me, &c. Pſal. 30. 6, 7. Job 29. 18,19,20. *c.* 30. 15, 16, 17.

(4) Pious Souls may ſuffer many a change and paſſage, from peace of Conſcience to perplexities of Conſcience, and from thence again to peace, and from this to perplexity. The God of peace is unchangable, but the peace of God is changable: ſubject to many changes. Conſcience it ſelf even when ſanctified is prone to viciſſitudes, and unevenneſs; or we had not been preſſed to keep it with all diligence; nor the *Pſalmiſt* prayed God to unite and fix it. And if the power it ſelf be ſo variable, much more muſt the peace. *Job*, *David*, *&c.* had their ſprings and falls, their ſummer and winter of this peace; (as the Texts already quoted make clear.) And theſe take turn; now this, then another. Saints are compared to Stars, which ſtand not always in the ſame ſite and poſture. 'Tis weeping at night, joy in the morning. And again, weeping in the morning, and joy at night; and perhaps ſometimes the Soul is joyful both day and night: *Jam.* 1. 17. *Job* 14. 20. *Prov.* 4. 23. *Pſal.* 86. 11. *Dan.* 12. 3. *Pſal.* 38. 5. *&* 77. 6. *&* 42. 8. So that the gracious Soul may not give up his former peace for falſe and unſound, becauſe it is not fixed and ſteady. Even the Heavenly Bodies have their declinations and revolutions.

(5) Pious Souls may be under ſuch piercing ſtrokes for a long tract of time. The ſhame of their tranſgreſſions, and the ſenſe and ſting of God's terrours may have afflicted them from

from their youth up. God may remove their Souls ſo far off from peace, that they may even forget proſperity, and with every breath they fetch they may be filled with bitterneſs. *Surely againſt me is he turned, he turneth his hand againſt me all the day*, ſaith the Church. Hence it is, you read ſo many pathetick and preſſing expoſtulations. *How long, how long, how long ſhall I take counſel in my ſoul, having ſorrow in my heart daily? Pſal.* 88. 15. *Jer.* 3. 25. *Lam.* 3. 3, 17. *c.* 5. 20. *Job* 9. 18. *Pſal.* 13. 1, 2. How long is a queſtion beyond my capacity to anſwer. Theſe godly men may ſeem to imply as it were meet only for God's own reſolution. This I may ſay for certain, thoſe diſtreſſes ſhall never bear a longer date than thy life doth. Death gives a perfect *quietus eſt*. Conſcience will be now perfected, and thy comforts will be perfected with it. The power ſhall be perfect, and the peace muſt be therefore perfect. Now ſhall your entry into peace be for ever perpetuated: *Rev.* 14. 13. *Mat.* 25. 46. 1 *Cor.* 13. 10, 12. *Iſa.* 57. 2. 2. God doth uſually diſmiſs theſe diſtreſſes before the death of the righteous. I remember not one inſtance upon Scripture-record to the contrary. But how many find we who lived perplexedly, to have died peaceably, and have aſcended with an heaven in their Conſcience, up to their Chriſt in the heavens? And who after all their ſore diſtreſſes have at length ſweetly ſung old *Simeon's Nunc dimittis*, *Lord now letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace*; as *Job*, *David*, *&c.* I do not ſay but a Saint may be ſtick-

ſticking in theſe deeps when death is ſent for him. For any thing I can ſee in the promiſes of Chriſt, the power of Conſcience, or in the properties and natures of this peace. *Job* ſeems to imply its poſſibility, while he is imploring mercy for the contrary in his own caſe. Nor are thoſe arguments to be unattended, wherewith the pious have been wont to preſs God for peace in their prayers from death and the grave; as tacitly including, that they may be put upon that hazard without peace, unleſs he pleaſe to anticipate it of his grace: *Luk.* 2. 29. *Job* 10. 20, 21. *Pſal.* 6. 3, 4, 5. & 88. 10. & 16, *&c.* But yet ſuch is his indulgence, that he maketh but few inſtances of ſuch a paternal diſplicence, as his Children have to conflict, both with death and theſe diſtreſſes at once. We find *Hezekiah* (it's true) within a few paces of death, and upon the brink of the grave, without peace, and in great bitterneſs. But God ſoon puts another cup into his hand, recalls him from the pit, and reſtores him to his peace: *Iſa.* 38. 10.------20. 3. In this diſconſolate condition the godly may yet doubt, whether they ſhall ever be diſmiſſed from theſe diſtreſſes; their deſertion is ſo grievous, and diſtruſt ſo great. I ſhall go ſoftly all my years, in the bitterneſs of my ſoul. I ſhall go down to the grave without ſo much as any glimpſe more of my God, or of his grace. I am cut off. Lo, God hath overthrown me. He hath ſtript me of my glory, and taken the crown from my head. He hath deſtroyed me on every ſide, and I am gone; and mine hope hath

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he removed like a tree. Thus we find them casting their eye inward, and crying out, Why is my pain perpetual? and my wound incurable? yea upward, and complaining, Wherefore dost thou forget us for ever? How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord for ever? Will the Lord cast off for ever? will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? &c. *Isa.* 38. 10, 11, 15. *Lam.* 3. 54. *Job* 19. 6. 9, 10. *Jer.* 15. 18. *Lam.* 5. 20. *Psal.* 13. 1. 77. 7, 8, 9.

(6) The distresses of pious Souls may be of a large extent for quantity as well as of a long extent for continuance. Very extensive in themselves, and may extend over the whole Subject. 1. In themselves, they may be so large, as I cannot meditate any other stint or limit, than this, that they shall not extend unto a full and final despair. Otherwise they may, and often do exceed the sense of others, and the speech of them that are the sad and suffering subjects. *Job*'s grief was very great, so great that words and weeping too were too narrow for the vastness of it. *Oh that my grief were throughly weighed* (saith he) *and my calamity laid in the balances together! For now it would be heavier than the sand of the sea, therefore my words are swallowed up.* All language is too little to declare their greatness, and therefore is a line too short to limit or determine it; and yet neither silence nor speech many times can moderate it. *Though I speak my grief is not assuaged; and though I forbear what am I eased?* *Job* 2. 13. *c.* 6. 2, 3. *c.* 16. 6. 2. They extend some-

ſometimes over the whole ſubject; all Conſcience, the immediate and proper ſubject, and over all under the power of Conſcience, the remote and leſs proper ſubject. Conſcience is ſometimes all in a combuſtion in the ſadded Chriſtian. *My heart is like wax* (ſaith *David*) *melted in the midſt of my bowels.* It fainteth, it faileth me; it is grieved, pained, ſore pained, within me, ſmitten and withered like graſs, oppreſſed, overwhelmed in me, diſquieted, diſtracted; yea, my heart within me is deſolate. *The troubles of my heart are inlarged, &c.* Pſal. 22.14. & 84.2. & 40.12. & 73.21. & 55. 4. & 102. 4. & 61. 2. & 38. 8. & 88. 15. & 143. 4. & 25.17. Conſcience the commander in chief, being thus mortally wounded, the whole army is in a rout, and either runs before the purſuer, or are roaring out their plaints, *&c.* Reaſon is diſtracted, the reſolutions of the Will diſſipated, Affections diſcompoſed, Paſſions diſtempered, and every power of ſoul and body is diſordered. Conſcience thus pierced and broken, all come in to bear a part in this ſad Cataſtrophe *The poyſon hereof drinketh up my ſpirit*, ſaith *Job. My ſpirit was overwhelmed*, ſaith *David. My ſpirit faileth. My ſoul is ſore vexed, and conſumed with grief. My ſoul cleaveth unto the duſt. My ſoul fainteth for thy ſalvation. My ſoul is full of trouble. I will ſpeak in the anguiſh of my ſpirit* (ſaith the former). *I will complain in the bitterneſs of my ſoul*, Job 6.4. Pſal. 143.4,7. & 6.3. & 31.9. & 119.25, 81. & 88.3. *Job* 7. 11. And can ye expect it much better with the

the body? Review the ſame inſtances. *Fear came upon me and trembling, which made all my bones to ſhake. My bones are pierced in me, and my ſinews take no reſt. My bowels boiled and reſted not. He cleaveth my reins aſunder, and doth not ſpare; he poureth out my gall upon the ground. My bones are vexed. There is no ſoundneſs in my fleſh becauſe of thine anger; neither is there any reſt in my bones, becauſe of my ſin. The arrows of his quiver enter into my reins. Mine eye trickleth down and ceaſeth not without any intermiſſion. Mine eyes fail for thy word, ſaying when wilt thou comfort me?* Job 4. 14, *c.* 30. 17, 27. *c.* 16. 13. Pſal. 6. 2. *&* 38. 3. *&* 119. 82. *Lam.* 3. 13, 48. And now Soul wilt thou tell me, or rather tell thy ſelf whether thy ſorrow be like unto their ſorrow, who were yet Saints of the firſt magnitude?

(7) The diſtreſſes of pious Souls may be very eminent for quality and degree, as well as for quantity and duration. I cannot undertake to cleave an hair, to ſay thus far they may be intended, and no further. Though I doubt not to ſay, that theſe anxieties and afflictions can never bring them to an utter and univerſal averſation from God or godlineſs. Their diffidence and demeanor towards him may be very deplorable, yea dreadful; but their ſpot is the ſpot of children. They do not, they dare not ſay unto God depart from us, we deſire not the knowledg of thy ways. Yea, this is their greateſt deſire, that they were his and he theirs. Turn us again, O God,

and

and cauſe thy face to ſhine, is the burden of their prayers. And this is the greateſt thing they deplore, that they have turned away from him, and that he is turned againſt them. And could we trace their fears and dolors to their proper form, we ſhould find; they did not ſpring from an averſation to God or grace, but from an appretiation. That they drag ſo heavily, is not that they hate holineſs, but in that they have not holineſs (at leaſt) as to their ſenſe, or with that ſtrength and ſweetneſs they would fain have: *Pſal.* 44. 17,---- 23. *Deut.* 32. 5. *Job* 21. 14. *Pſal.* 42. 1,----6. & 80. 3, 7, 14, 19. *Iſa.* 49. 14. *Lam.* 3. 3. *Pſal.* 73. 21, 22. Nevertheleſs they may be deeply plunged in this ditch, and may arrive 1. To formidable conceptions of God; as if God were not only not kind, but cruel to them; as if he failed his promiſe, had forgotten to be gracious, and in anger ſhut up his tender mercies. As if he were not only deaf to their prayers, but diſtorted his providence, and did not do them juſtice, and were immovably determined upon their deſtructions. Such a feaver, or ſuch a frency rather, may theſe diſtreſſes ſometimes draw upon the underſtanding. So that the Soul may not ſtick to ſay, *I am troubled at his preſence; when I conſider, I am afraid of him*, Job 30. 21. Pſal. 77. 8, 9. *Lam.* 3. 8. Job 19. 7. *c.* 23. 13, 15, 16. 2. To falſe conſtructions of Godlineſs; as if they had laboured in vain, and ſpent their ſtrength for nought, and in vain. *Thou ſaidſt* (ſaith *Elihu*) *what advantage will it be unto thee?*

and

and what profit ſhall I have if I be cleanſed from my ſin? Thinkeſt thou this to be right? 'Tis true, I do not find the abode and fixing of ſuch apprehenſions upon a faithful heart. But holy *David*'s feet were almoſt gone, his ſteps had well nigh ſlipt, when he ſaw obdurate ſinners proſpered, and himſelf thus plagued. He as upon the borders of this crime, *Verily I have cleanſed my heart in vain, and waſhed my hands in innocency.* But he ſoon takes up the tentation: *Iſa.* 49. 4. *Job* 35. 2, 3. *Pſal.* 73. 2, 12,-------16. 3. To furious commotions, both of their reaſon and paſſions; ſo as to curſe their birth, to complain of life, and to court and covet death, ſaith *Job*, 3. *per totum. Mark me,* (ſaith he) *and be aſtoniſhed, even when I remember, I am afraid, and trembling taketh hold of my fleſh. My ſighing cometh before I eat, and my roarings are poured out like the waters. My bones ſhook, my hair ſtood up,* Job 21. 5, 6. *c.* 3. 24. *c.* 4. 14, 15. 4. To fearful concuſſions of the very frame of nature in them. *I am troubled,* (ſaith *David*) *I am bowed down greatly. I go mourning all the day long; there is no ſoundneſs in my fleſh. I am feeble and ſore broken. I have roared by reaſon of the diſquietneſs of my heart. My ſoul is full of troubles, and my life draweth nigh unto the grave,* ſaith *Heman. I am as a man that hath no ſtrength. My members are as a ſhadow,* ſaith Job. *My bowels boiled and reſted not,* Pſal. 38. 6, 7, 8. & 88. 3, 4. Job 17. 7. *c.* 30. 27. Conſcience pours out blackneſs and darkneſs upon the conſtitution, and this pours it back upon

upon Conſcience. 5. To frightful concluſions againſt themſelves, As if all paſt were but hypocriſie, all preſent were but iniquity, and all future were but excluſion from mercy, and enduring of miſery; as if it were not only paſt help but paſt hope. What is my ſtrength that I ſhould hope, ſaith this Soul with *Job*. Yea, where is now my hope? as for my hope who ſhall ſee it? *My ſtrength and my hope is periſhed from the Lord. My judgment is paſſed over from my God. My bones are dried up, my hope is loſt, and I am cut off for my part. I am counted with them that go down into the pit, like the ſlain that lie in the grave, whom God remembreth no more*, Job 6. 11. c. 17.15. Iſa.40. 27. Ezek. 37. 11. Pſal. 88. 4, 5. Upon ſuch precipices may the prejudices and paſſions of pious Souls hurry them. So that their Souls may refuſe comfort, as if they reſolved with *Jacob* to go down into the grave mourning, and to give the Sons of Conſolation but *Iſaiah*'s language in another caſe, *Look away from me, I will weep bitterly, labour not to comfort me*, Pſal.77.2. Gen,37.35. Iſa.22.4.

Let me only add, that though I have juſtified theſe Propoſitions, I muſt not be underſtood to juſtifie the paſſions and provocations inſtanced. I have not written this for the patronage, but plucking up of ſin; nor for the ulcerating but healing of Souls; as alſo that others may hear and fear, that they fall not after the ſame examples of diſtruſt into the ſame exceſſes of diſquiet.

Q. 12. *What if a pious Soul hath hitherto perſiſted in the uſe of ſuch means, and yet finds no peace, but his perplexities rather increaſe, what ſhall he do?*

Direct. 1. Abide with perſeverance. Give not over but go on with the uſe of the means preſcribed thee; nor ſlacken thy diligence in the duties ſhewn thee. If they are means, they conduce to this end, and will be crowned with ſucceſs in the end. And if thou expect to come at the end it muſt be by a continued uſe of the means. Theſe are not wells without water, nor clouds without rain. They tend to peace in their native operation, and ſhall end in peace, according to God's ordinance and promiſe: *Joh.* 16. 33. *Iſa.* 32. 17. *c.* 26. 3. *Pſal.* 119. 65. *Rom.* 2. 10. You ſay then you have not declined from the means; but I doubt you have either declined from Chriſt in them, or in your care about them. Let me ask you 1. Hath there not been ſlightneſs in the courſe of your duties? You do the work of the Lord; but is it not negligently? How often do you quicken and convene all that is within you? How often do call upon your drowſie hearts? Awake, awake, *Deborah*; awake, awake to this holy duty. If you are ſlothful, no marvel, that God and Conſcience do ſtill ſcourge you; for you are herein guilty both of unkindneſs to God, and cruelty to your ſelves; for as much as every duty hath a reward in it for you as well as it is a debt to him: *Jer.* 48. 10.

Pſal.

Pſal. 103. 1. & 108. 2. *Jud.* 5. 12. Be diligent then, that you may be found of him in peace? He is the rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him. Their Souls ſhall delight themſelves in fatneſs: 2 *Pet.* 3. 14. *Heb.* 11. 6. *Iſa.* 55. 2. 2. Have not you ſlighted Chriſt in your duties? You come and that often, but do you come unto God by him? Do you take him with you in the hand of your faith, and in the arms of your love? No marvel if God be ſtrange to your Souls, if you are ſtrange to his Son. What atonement, what acceptance can you have, or hope for but by him? He is our peace: *Heb.* 7. 25. *Jer.* 14. 8. *Rom.* 5. 11. 1 *Pet.* 2. 5. *Epheſ.* 2. 13, 14. Do all in the name of the Lord Jeſus, from hence forwards. Keep him freſh before the eye of Conſcience; This may fill you with confidence. Chriſt now undertakes the caſe, and that you ſhall in time have comfort. Bring him in your hand, and he beareth you upon his heart. And he cannot be denied who hath his father's ear, his father's heart: *Col.* 3. 17. *Epheſ.* 3. 12. *Joh.* 16. 22, 25. *Exod.* 28. 29, 30. 1 *Joh.* 5. 14.

Direct. 2. I adviſe you that notwithſtanding, (1) That you attend with patience. You have need of patience, of the patience of expecting, as well as of the patience of enduring, that after ye have done the will of God, you may receive the promiſes. I doubt your work is not done, or not well done. However there muſt be time allowed for, between work and wages, between ſeed-time and har-

veſt. In due ſeaſon you ſhall reap if you fain not: *Heb.* 10. 36. *Gal.* 6. 9. Durſt you ſay with that profane Purſevant of King *Joram? This evil is of the Lord, what ſhould I wait for the Lord any longer?* Nay rather ſhould you ſay with the Church, *In the way of thy judgments will we* (ſaith ſhe, *have we*) *wait for thee, who in the midſt of judgment remembreth mercy.* Yea, and waits that he may be gracious to his, (when it will be the beſt ſeaſon, when it will be beſt for their Souls), for the Lord is a God of judgment: 2 *King.* 6. 33. *Iſa.* 26. 8. *Hab.* 3. 2. *Iſa.* 30. 18. God will be known to be the God of all comfort, and of this arbitrarily; not at our but at his own pleaſure and appointment. He will ſpeak peace, and that in ſeaſon, in due ſeaſon, when it ſhall ſeem moſt free in him the giver, and when it ſhall be moſt fit for you the receivers. But you muſt leave eternity to take his own time, and not look on it as if it would be at no time, becauſe it is not at your time. The viſion is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it ſhall ſpeak and not lie. Though it tarry, wait for it; becauſe it will ſurely come, it will not tarry beyond God's appointment, or your advantage: 2 *Cor.* 1. 3, 4. *Epheſ.* 1. 9. *Pſal.* 85. 8. *Heb.* 10. 37. *Hab.* 2. 7. Be patient therefore; there is ſome peace even in patience; for it calms and ſtills the paſſions, and gives the ſoul the poſſeſſion of it ſelf; and 'tis ſeldom but peace enſueth on patience, for this hath the promiſe of it. *I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined unto me, and heard*

heard my cry. He brought me up alſo out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, &c. Jam. 5. 7,8. Luk. 21. 19. Pſal. 40.1, 2, 3. Iſa. 40.27,—31. *c.* 26.9. 64.4.

Direct. 3. Abet hope. This will be an Anchor ſure and ſtedfaſt in the moſt aſtoniſhing tempeſts, when you cannot uſe either ſails or rudder. What though thy heart be caſt down there is no happineſs, nothing but horrour in hand? yet ſhouldſt thou charge thy Soul with *David*, *Hope thou in God. Let Iſrael hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him there is plenteous redemption. His compaſſions fail not, he hath corrected thee, but he hath not conſumed thee.* And whence is this but of his mercy? *This I recall to mind* (ſaith the Church in her ſore and nigh ſinking condition) *therefore have I hope*, Heb.6.19. Pſal. 42. 5, 11. & 130. 7. *Lam.* 3. 21, 22. I grant your caſe is deplorable, but not deſperate. Your recovery is arduous, but not impoſſible. Others have been reſtored, *Job*, *David*, *Heman*, *&c.* whoſe feet were as faſt, yea faſter locked in theſe ſtocks than yours. If you make reflection, you'l meet with little, or no reaſon, to let your hopes flag and fail at this rate. Is there not the ſame way open ſtill? the ſame mercy in God? the ſame merit in Chriſt? the ſame miniſtration of the Covenant? Are you not as capable of peace now? when God hears you praying, crying, lamenting after him, and ſees you purſuing, panting after him, and preſſing on him, as you were heretofore, when he heard little elſe (perhaps) than

blaſphemies, ſaw you weltring in your blood, and yet was then found of you when you ſought him not? Why ſhould you caſt away thoſe confidences of hope? or not rather hold them faſt? *Heb.* 10. 35. *c.* 3. 6, 14. Beſides, the valley of *Achor* (*i.e.* of trouble, which had its name from *Achans* troubling them, and there being troubled of the Lord) may be for a door of hope. So great a darkneſs may preſage, and be but the immediate precurſor of a dawning. *When I am weak*, *i.e.* in my ſelf, *then am I ſtrong*, *i.e.* in my Saviour, ſaith *Paul*. When his feet were faſteſt in the ſtocks his liberty was neareſt, and his bands were looſed. When *Job*'s and *David*'s diſtreſſes did moſt overflow their banks, then did their moſt peace and joy flow into their boſoms. God comforteth thoſe that are caſt down. Yea, when men are caſt down then thou ſhalt ſay there is lifting up; and he ſhall ſave the humble perſon: *Joſh.* 7. 26. *Hoſ.* 2. 15. 2 *Cor.* 12. 10. *Act.* 16. 24, 26. *Job* 42. *Pſal.* 31. 22. 2 *Cor.* 7. 6. *Job* 22. 29.

Direct. 4. Adhere yet to him, and that with full purpoſe. You have loſt your aſſurance, this is expired in lamentation and anguiſh; but do not let go your adherence, this will end in life and happineſs at the laſt. God's end by putting you to feed on huſks is not to keep you off, but to quicken you home to your father's houſe; not that your Souls ſhould drive further from him among the ſhelfs and ſands of deſpair, but draw nearer to him in the ſtill and ſafe waters of dependance:

dance: *Act.* 11. 23. *Deut.* 30. 20. *Pſal.* 83. 16. *Hoſ.* 5. 15. He expects that you cleave to him with ſteadier reſolutions, and commit your ſelves to him with a ſteadier recumbence. 1. Cleave to him more ſtedfaſtly. You that fear him are called on to cleave unto him. And alas! whither can you go from him? and find the good and peace you look for. Thou mayſt call for thy lovers, but among all thy lovers there is none can comfort thee, while God is wounding and chaſtiſing thee. Is it not thy looſneſs and inconſiſtency with God, which hath brought thee into theſe labyrinths of confuſion, and mazes of perplexities? Call back thy Soul hither. Return unto thy reſt, O my Soul. My Soul wait thou only upon God. And keep thy Soul here. For there is no quiet off the center. But every thing is quiet in its center. Happy is he that hath the God of *Jacob* for his help, whoſe hope is in the Lord his God: *Deut.* 10. 20. *Lam.* 1. 2, 19. *Jer.* 30. 14. *Pſal.* 116. 7. & 62. 5. & 146. 5. I doubt your reſtleſneſs groweth out of irreſolution. You are not throughly reſolved for God as your center and chiefeſt good. Or how is it that you are ſo eaſily carried from him? or cleave no more entirely to him? a ſtone needs not to be driven downward, nor fire upward; they affect their center, and acquieſce in it, nor are drawn from it, but by force and violence. Come then and gather up your reſolutions for God. Be ye ſtedfaſt and immovable. Yea, thou maiſt humbly tell him, I will not let thee go except thou bleſs

me. No, though thou haſt ſore broken me in the place of Dragons, and covered me with the ſhadow of death, my heart ſhall not turn back from thee. While I live I will ſerve thy Majeſty; and when I die it ſhall be at the feet of thy mercy. O how ſuch prayers and purpoſes have power with God and prevail. Lo! this is the reſt wherewith we may cauſe the weary to reſt, and this is the refreſhing: 1 *Cor.* 15.58. *Gen.* 32. 26, 28. *Pſal.* 44. 18, 19. *Iſa.* 28.12.

2. Commit your ſelves to God more ſteadily. I ſee your caſe comes off but badly from your hands; will you caſt it once at length into God's hand? Unto him will you commit your cauſe? Caſt thy burden upon the Lord and he ſhall ſuſtain thee. Commit thy way and works unto the Lord, truſt alſo in him, and he ſhall bring it to paſs, and thy thoughts ſhall be eſtabliſhed. But if you think to warm you by your own ſparks, and to walk in the light of your fire, *This ſhall ye have of mine hand, ſaith the Lord, ye ſhall lie down in ſorrow*, Job 5. 8. Pſal. 55.22. & 37. 5. Prov. 16. 3. Iſa. 50.11. Unbelief like a growing torrent will bear down all the props and pillars of hope and obedience before it; and leaves thy duties bare without ſpirit or ſtrength. Nor wilt thou be able to extricate thy mind out of that maze of doubtful and perplexed reaſonings, wherein ſhe is intangled, without this exerciſe of faith.

Obj. *Ah, but may ſuch as I dare to adventure it? Will it not be preſumption in me to transfer*

fer over my caſe to him, and truſt in God?

Anſw. No, in no wiſe. 1. Devolve thy cares and caſe thou muſt ſome-where, or thou muſt ſtill droop under them, and die away in them. And where canſt thou devolve them better than on him, with whom is the multitude of tender mercies, and who careth for thee? Were thy ſtrength the ſtrength of ſtones, or thy fleſh of braſs, thou art not able to ſtand up under them. But with him is omnipotence, he is able to keep that which thou committeſt to him. And in the day of thy calamity will be thy ſtay: *Pſal.* 51.1. 1 *Pet.* 5.7. 2 *Tim.* 1. 12. *Pſal.* 18. 18. 2. The door ſtands open to thee. Thou haſt free liberty to unload all thy burdens here, as the Saints have done. *I poured out my complaint before him. I ſhewed before him my trouble.* Yea, thou maiſt leave thy burdens with him, and lean thy whole buſineſs and bleſſedneſs upon him. *Truſt in him at all times ye people, pour out your heart before him. God is a refuge for us, Selah.* Nay, *they that know his name will put their truſt in him. I will truſt and not be afraid,* ſaith one Prophet. *At what time I am afraid I will truſt in thee,* ſaith another: *Pſal.* 142. 2. & 55.22. & 62.8. *Iſa.* 12.2. *Pſal.* 56.3. 3. 'Tis thy duty, and that God now demands of thee. *Who is among you that walketh in darkneſs, and hath no light? let him truſt in the name of the Lord, and ſtay upon his God.* Behold, 'tis not only thy liberty, thou maiſt do it, (therefore no preſumption) but 'tis his law, thou muſt do it, or thou ſineſt againſt his preſcription, both here

and

and elſewhere. Come then, if thou trembleſt at ſin, turn in hither, and truſt in him. Ye that fear the Lord, truſt in the Lord; he is their help and their ſhield. You that cannot reflect on him as yours with comfort; yet may and ſhould reſt in, and roll your ways upon him, with much compoſedneſs; ſuch is God's all-ſufficience in your inſufficience, his everlaſting ſtrength in your temporary weakneſs. *Truſt ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlaſting ſtrength,* Iſa. 50. 10. c. 10. 20. Pſal. 4. 5. & 115. 11. & 37. 3, 5. Iſaiah 26. 4.

Q. 13. *What if a Pious Soul after all his ſelf-examinings and ſedulous endeavours cannot only not gather up any preſent grounds for peace, but gives over all his paſt evidences of grace and peace as unſound and falſe; what ſhall he do to attain Peace?*

The Premiſſes in anſwer to the former Queſtion are of proper and pertinent application hereunto. But I add,

Direct. 1. Quicken thy dull heart to a preſent acceptance of Jeſus Chriſt, as thy only Mediator, and of God as thy only portion and principal good. Happily you might with more eaſe and leſs expence by this time have reared up a new fabrick of comfort, by falling in with Chriſt, than you have been at for repairing the old frame in which you find ſo many leaks and cracks. However a preſent cloſe will clear all the ſuits that are brought againſt your former

former tenure. For if God be once yours, and Chriſt yours, which is the inſeparable effect of a preſent faith, then peace is yours too, for he is the God of Peace, and Chriſt is the Prince of Peace: *Iſa.* 26. 3. *Eph.* 2. 12, 13, 14, *Rom.* 5. 1. *c.* 15. 33. *Iſa.* 9. 6. I grant there is a good and great uſe of reviewing old evidences, and reviving old experiences, (of which before) but in this circumſtance, when Conſcience damns them all as alien or abſolete, 'tis beſt to fall in with the moſt preſent and moſt proper way to divert the impending extremity, and to draw the difference to an immediate head; which I apprehend is not ſo expeditiouſly done, by diſcuſſing what is paſt, (whether you have ſincerely believed or not? as by determining the preſent, that you put all out of doubt by a preſent faith. God directs you hereto by his command in caſe of darkneſs, when you have no light you cannot ſee him, *&c.* The godly have drawn it down into practice alſo. *David* reflects inwardly, and there is nothing but diſquiet; he therefore reſolves to ſit poring no longer for pillars of hope within him, but by a preſent truſt and hope in God to put his caſe into more clearneſs; and the reſult is praiſe to him, and peace to himſelf: *Iſa.* 50. 10. *Job* 35. 14. *Pſal.* 42. 11. *&* 13. 5. *cum* 3. Let it be ſuppoſed then, that thy former ſecurities have been unſound, yet the door is open by which thou maiſt enter into peace, and live for ever. (Conſult the Directions, *Queſt.* 6.) Art thou not weary and heavy laden? lo, Chriſt calls thee,

thee, *Come unto me and I will give you rest.* You ſhall find reſt for your Souls. God quickens and encourageth thee. Haſt thou played the harlot with many lovers, and dealt treacherouſly with him! *Yet, return again to me, ſaith the Lord. Return and I will heal thy back-ſlidings, &c.* Mat. 11. 28, 29. Jer. 3. 1, 12, 14, 20, 22.

Direct. 2. Be quiet under this hard diſpenſation. Be ſtill, and know that he is God; who cannot be conquered muſt not be complained of. Murmurings and complaints, as if he were rigorous, can never cure thee of thy wounds. Well may they cut them wider, and pierce them deeper, and make them ſmart with more anguiſh, and bleed in more abundance. 'Tis quietneſs under the hands of thy Surgeon, and confeſſing his righteouſneſs and thy rebellion that doth diſpoſe thee to a cure. Witneſs *Job*'s caſe, and *Elihus* counſel: *Pſal.* 46. 10. *Job* 6. 33. & 34. & 35. & 36. Doth God pervert judgment? or doth the Almighty pervert juſtice? ſhall not the judg of all the earth do right? How long did he forbear you? How much hath he given if not forgiven you. If deſert be urged he might have lain you ere this in the loweſt hell, and lodged you in eternal flames; for the wages of every ſin is no leſs than eternal death. So that his puniſhment is in no proportion to your deſert, but far leſs, far below it. Rather ſay, God is righteous, but I have rebelled. *Righteouſneſs belongeth to him, but to me confuſion of face, as at this day,* Job 8. 3. Gen. 18. 25. Rom. 6. 23. Ezra 9. 13. Lam. 1. 18. Dan. 9. 7. Quietneſs

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(I mean from murmuring aggravations, not from matter of action) is the moſt proper and pleaſant way to peace with God, and peace of Conſcience. Yea, quietneſs is not without ſome peace and ſedateneſs from unruly commotions, as its inſeparable companion. And now God doth by Souls as he doth by Ships. *He maketh the ſtorm a calm, ſo that the waves thereof are ſtill. Then are they glad becauſe they be quiet; ſo he bringeth them unto their deſired haven*, Pſal. 107. 29, 30.

Q. 14. *What Conſiderations are there to quiet the heart in ſuch agonies and diſtreſs of Conſcience?*

There are many, many ways. I ſhall preſent you ſome of them, and but ſome; which you may gather up from others, and from the ordinary effects, ends and operation of ſuch troubles on the pious.

Firſt. From others.

(1) What is there, yea, what is there not in God which may quiet your hearts? If all-ſufficience can do it, here it is; and it is offered and expoſed to the imbraces and improvements of your faith, love, patience, and hope: *Gen.* 17. 1. *Iſa.* 45. 22, 24, 25. His infinite and immutable perfections have your Souls to feaſt with, and feed upon. Your ſtrength and your heart faileth you. But (if the bottle be empty, the well of water which is by you, (though perhaps you ſee it not is full), God is the ſtrength of my heart and my portion for

for ever: *Psal.* 73. 26. *Jer.* 10. 16. *Gen.* 21. 15, 19. Remember, 'tis an infinite and immutable mercy that orders you out this condition an infinite and immutable wisdom that overrules it, for duration how long, for degree how far, *&c.* an infinite and immutable goodness upholds you in and under it, and an infinite truth and power is bound in his own time to pluck you out of it, and to make good all his promises in and by it. *God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it,* 1 Cor. 10. 13.

(2) For Christ. What an abundance is there in him to quiet you? yea, fulness, all fulness, and this for you. If you will but by faith fall in with him, you shall receive of his fulness grace for grace: *Col.* 1. 19. *Joh.* 1. 16. Nay, in Christ there is not only matter of peace and joy for you, but of boasting, of triumph. His preaching, his prayers, his promises, his passion, resurrection, ascension, *&c.* Do all call upon you as himself sometime did in person, *Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me.* Yea, he is now touched with the feeling of your infirmities (in way of compassion, though not of corrupt passions) so that you may come boldly to the throne of grace: *Phil.* 3. 3. καυχώμενοι, 2 *Cor.* 2. 14. *Joh.* 14. 1. *Heb.* 4. 15, 16.

(3) For Christians. You may fetch matter of heart-quieting from their distresses, which yours cannot equal, from their dignity which yours

yours cannot exceed, from their deliverance, which is an earneſt of yours, as alſo from their directions and exhortations which tell you it is good, that a man ſhould both hope, and quietly wait for the ſalvation of the Lord. *That he is the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we are comforted of God*, Lam. 3.26. 2 Cor.1.3,4.

Secondly. From the operation, ends and effects of theſe ſad troubles. This I had principally in my eye, and let me pitch here a little; becauſe the pious Soul is apt to pore more upon their extremity, than to pry into their ends and effects; neglecting the bright ſide of the Cloud, and noting only the black and dark ſide. Conſider then, theſe ſharp throws and bitter agonies are not only to puniſh, but to purge, to prove, to approve, to improve, and to prepare his Saints for more ſignal ſervices or ſufferings. Of which you will ſee full proof in the further progreſs. Conſider then in theſe agonies,

1. Happily they are to purge me. The ſpirit of judgment, and the ſpirit of burning is but to waſh away the filth of the Daughters of Sion. *Like fullers ſope and a refiners fire, not to conſume but cleanſe and purifie them, to purge them as gold and ſilver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteouſneſs. By this ſhall the iniquity of Jacob be purged.* And ſhall I quarrel at that pill, or caſt away that potion, which is bleſſed with ſuch a ſequel? becauſe 'tis bitter

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in it ſelf, or breaks my ſleep, or burdens my ſtomach, *&c.* whence it conſerves nature, and cures my diſeaſes, and the little pains I feel are preventive of far greater? *Iſa.*4.4. *Mal.* 3. 2, 3. *Iſa.* 27.9. Perhaps it is to purge, and ſo heal thy ſleepineſs and inanimadvertence. *David* lay in an apoplectick drowſineſs for a long time. This ſtate required ſtrong purgatives, and ſharp preſcriptions. God therefore applieth this medicine, and it effectually awakens and recovers him: *Pſal.* 51. Or perhaps it is to purge out pride and ſtiffneſs of ſpirit. And gentle potions will not do it, there muſt be ſome other draught, or the doſe muſt be doubled. *David* had enough to humble him, but his heart ſtood it out undauntedly, till God put this cup of trembling into his hand; and this fetcheth all up, and his heart down, and his Soul-health returneth to its old frame, *ibid.* What ever it is this may quiet, that theſe troubles are not a ponyard to kill, but a purge to cure.

2. Happily it is to prove me. *Behold I will melt them and try them, for how ſhall I do for the daughter of my people?* 'Tis not ſaid, I will burn them, and make an utter end of them. Let it be to a *Judas*, or a *Cain*, an evil, an only evil. But to a *Job* there is good as well as evil. Theſe troubles were for his probation rather than puniſhment, not at all for his perdition. *Thou O God haſt proved us, thou haſt tried us as ſilver is tried.* God knoweth us perfectly and intuitively, but 'tis that we may upon trial know our ſelves, and be leſs ſtrangers to our own hearts, or that others may know us. This furnace then is not

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to deſtroy but to diſcriminate: *Judg.* 9. 7. *Ezek.* 7. 5. *Job* 2. 3, *&c.* 7. 18. *Pſal.* 66. 10. May not this quiet you? that whereas it might have been a milſtone to tear you, 'tis but a touch-ſtone to try you? to acquaint you more with your ſelves, and acquaint others more with your ſincerity. Why doth God ſuffer you to wander thus long in the Wilderneſs, but to humble you, and prove you, and to know what is in your hearts. God might have thrown you like brands into the fire, but he caſts you like Gold into the furnace. This affliction is not to ruin but to refine you: *Deut.* 8.2. *Iſa.*48.10. *Zach.*13.9.

3. Happily it is to approve me. *When he hath tried me* (ſaith *Job*) *I ſhall come forth as gold*; more pure and more approved. The Primitive Saints were tried with inward heavineſs, as well as outward hardſhips. (And why? But) *That the trial of their faith being much more precious than of gold that periſheth, might be found unto praiſe, and honour, and glory,* Job 23.10. 1 Pet. 1.6, 7. Perhaps it may be to approve you to others here; *Job* is to this day propounded for a pattern of patience to the faithful, and muſt pray for his three friends, as the perſon whom God would only accept. He became the more ſignally approved by being ſo ſtrangely afflicted. *Paul*'s neceſſities, diſtreſſes, afflictions, ſtripes, ſorrows did but commend him the more to the Churches of our Saviour. The skill of the Pilot is beſt ſpoken by ſtorms and tempeſts: *Jam.* 5. 11. *Job* 42. 7, 8. 2 *Cor.* 4. 4.-----11. Or beyond a

perhaps it is to approve you at the appearing of Chriſt, when he ſhall ſay, *Lo, theſe are they that came out of great tribulations.* That againſt hope believed in hope; that neither ſhines nor ſtorms could diſſwade from my company, that would ſerve me, though it were for nought, and though I ſlew them yet would they truſt in me: 1 *Pet.* 1. 7. *Rev.* 7. 14. *Rom.* 4. 18. *Job* 13. 15. And ſhould not this quiet thee? when theſe afflictions are but as the fining pot for ſilver, and the furnace for gold, but to ſhew thy dignity, and the value men ſhould put upon thee, and to ſever the droſs and filth which hath been contracted by thee. Theſe bluſtring winds are but to blow off thoſe black clouds, which now overſhadow thee. Yet a little while, and the cenſures of *Job*'s friend will be blown away, and he ſhall bring forth thy righteouſneſs as the light, and thy judgment as the noon-day: *Pſal.*73.5,6.

4. Happily 'tis to improve me. Theſe corrections are not ſo much to cauſe ſmart by his hand unto you as becauſe he hath ſet his heart upon you. He doth not chaſtiſe you for his pleaſure, but for your profit; that ye may be partakers of his holineſs, and they may yield you the peaceable fruit of righteouſneſs. That you may come out of the furnace, not only brighter, but better, as the gold doth: *Job* 7. 17, 18. *Heb.* 12.10. *Pſal.* 119. 71. And ſhall not this quiet you? that your happineſs (not harm) is deſigned and driven on hereby? He lanceth and purgeth; but 'tis to heal

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your ſores, and ſecure your health. If the bodies of the tree are ſplit, the boughs ſhred, 'tis to make the ſtem thrive in bigneſs, the top in breadth, and the fruit in beauty, of ſuch as are planted in God's orchard. He is but debating, and that in meaſure with his trees, not deſtroying and grubbing them up as thorns and briars: *Iſa.* 27.8. *Jer.* 10.24,25. *c.* 30.11.

1. It is to improve and further the graces of his people. Not only the ſavour of it among Saints (yet what odoriferous ſmells come from ſuch broken ſpices in this mortar of affliction?) but the ſtrength and ſtability thereof in their own Souls. That they may be partakers of his holineſs: *Heb.* 12. 10. It removeth impediments from ſin within, ſenſe without, *&c.* which this fire either burneth up, or melteth down. It repreſenteth incentives from himſelf, God's ſeverity, *&c.* which are as ſpurs in the ſide. It raiſeth endeavour and impetuous and ſtrong deſires. Other Deer may play and ſcope in their green paſtures, and by the gliding ſtreams; but this chaſed Hart, in whom the arrows of the Almighty ſtick, can have no ſatiety till he hath ſeen God again as he hath ſeen him in the Sanctuary. No difficulty can now diſſwade, no danger can deter the love-ſick ſpouſe from ſeeking her beloved: *Pſal.* 42. *Cant.* 3. *&* 5. It rivets and ingageth the heart to God as his higheſt end, to godlineſs as his happieſt employment. The Soul that was wont to rove and reel in his reſolutions, is now ſetled and unſhaken. He finds nothing but huſks out of his fathers houſe, but here is bread enough

and to ſpare. His heart is fixed. Every blow driveth the nail fuller home to the head. He ſeeth there is no ſuch bitterneſs as in leaving him, no ſuch bleſſedneſs as in living with him. This is the concluſion whereto theſe conflicts and compunction bring him. *It is good for me to draw near to God*, Pſal. 119. 67,68, 106,107, 111, 112. *Luk.* 15. 17. *Jer.* 2. 19. *Pſal.* 65. 4. 73. 27,28. How ſhould this quiet you, that God is hereby carrying on that part of your work and welfare, which is ſo much coveted by you? This file is but to fetch off the ruſt from your graces, and to furbiſh them for you. The ſame razor that ſhaves off your peace doth eſtabliſh your grace, and makes it grow both thicker and ſtronger.

2. It is to improve the peace of his people at the yonder end. It yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteouſneſs to them that are exerciſed thereby. *Job* had more inward peace as well as outward proſperity, after ſuch pangs and gripes; and ſo had *David* after his diſtreſſes, if you allow for God's anſwer to his deſires and prayers: *Heb.* 12. 11. *Job* 42. 12. *Pſal.* 51. 7, 8, 12.

(1) Theſe troubles prepare a way to peace. 1. By breaking the Soul for ſin, which prepares it for this bleſſed ſeed, and mellows the heart to an acceptance of it, and to afford her beſt manure to it. There is no ſowing upon fallow ground. God will not caſt away his ſeed among thorns and brambles. The more your heart is plowed and harrowed, it promiſeth the better harveſt: *Jer.* 4. 3. *Pſal.* 34. 17, 18.

18. & 126.5. 2. By bringing the Soul out of her ſelf, and unbottoming her from all her falſe or friviolous foundations. Not a word can we now hear any more from *Job* in ſelf-juſtification, they are all in ſelf-judging, and ſelf-abhorring. This Soul is ſo frighted with daſhing upon the rock of her own righteouſneſs, that ſhe flieth it as a menſtruous cloth, and faſtneth all her dependance upon the righteouſneſs of Chriſt: *Iſa.* 28. 15,16. *Job* 42. 6. *Phil.* 3. 7, 8, 9. *Iſa.* 64. 6. *Rom.* 10. 4. 3. By bottoming the Soul upon a divine ſufficience. Hope thou in God, ſaith the Soul. Hitherto ſhe hath been like the Dove out of the Ark, fluttering up and down from one creature and courſe of life to another. But ſhe finds not where to reſt the ſole of her foot. The ſoul muſt have reſt; and finding none within, none without her, ſhe returns unto *Noah* in the Ark, unto God in Chriſt. She hath followed after her lovers, but they either fly from or frown upon her. And now ſhe ſaith, I will go and return to my firſt husband, for then was it better with me than now, *Pſal.* 43. 5. *Gen.* 8. 9. *Hoſ.* 2. 5.

(2) God is not wont to pour in peace but after ſome previous troubles. He firſt wounds, then heals; firſt breaks, then binds up. His comforts are for his mourners. Though the Soul be already brought out of *Egypt*, yet ſhe is not brought into *Canaan*, till ſhe have waded through the Sea, and wandred in the Wilderneſs. Chriſtians muſt quietly expect with Chriſt to paſs through a ſtate of exinanition,

before they come, or are preferred to a ſtate of exaltation: *Hoſ.* 6. 1. *Iſa.* 57. 18. *Phil.*2.5. ------11.

(3) Now it is, God doth uſually pour in joy and peace, as beſt magnifying his pity, his power, his promiſes, and plenteous mercies, to be thus ſeen in the Mount, and take an opportunity of their extremities. His Cordials are for them in that they now faint. Now there is beauty for aſhes, the oyl of joy for mourning, and the garment of praiſe for the ſpirit of heavineſs. 'Tis time to ſuccour, now they are ready to ſink. Thou wilt ſave the afflicted people. The Lord will light my candle, the Lord my God will enlighten my darkneſs. Yea, to the upright there ariſeth light in the darkneſs. And no ſooner is the ſtrong wind paſt, that cleft the rocks and rent the mountains, but they hear the ſmall and ſtill voice, in which God ſaith, *I am thy ſalvation, I will create peace, peace:* Gen.22.14. Iſa.40.29. *c.* 61. 3. *Pſal.* 18. 27, 28. *&* 112. 4. 1 *King.* 19. 11, 12.

(4) And now peace after ſuch perplexities is more perfect and precious. Now, how ſenſible is it? like reviving caſe after racking pangs, or the pleaſanteſt light after blackneſs of darkneſs. Now, how ſweet is it? ſweeter than the honey, and the honey-comb, after ſuch draughts of aloes and rhubarb. Time was this full Soul loathed the honey-comb; but now ſhe is hungry, every bitter thing is ſweet. Now how ſatisfying is it? How acceptable is the ſealed pardon to this ſelf-condemned

demned priſoner, that awoke only heretofore with the thoughts of racks and gibbets? Mannah ſhall be no more light bread from henceforth to him. He is ſatisfied as with marrow and fatneſs. Nay how ſtable and ſteady is it? Now that the wax is throughly ſoftned, the impreſſion ſticks upon it, eſpecially now the Almighty puts forth his arm in ſealing it. Now ſhe is provided with ſupports of hope, and ſtays of heart againſt future difficulties. Experience tells her ſuch deeps are paſſable, and a moſt delicious proſpect is of t'other ſide of the port. I might eaſily ſubjoyn more, but what I have ſaid is ſwoln unto ſuch a bulk already. What can, if the conſideration of theſe things cannot quiet you? Are you aware what God is preparing for you? Are not theſe clouds ready to diſſolve into ſhowers of comfort? Yet a little while and *Joſeph* ſhall ſee the iſſue of his priſon, and of God's intricate Providences to end all in his Preferment. *And though ye have lien among the pots yet ſhall ye be as the wings of a Dove covered with ſilver, and her feathers with yellow gold*, Pſal.68.13.

5. Happily this is to prepare me (may your Souls ſay) for ſome eminent uſe, and more than ordinary employment. Were you intended for the fire there needed no more than cutting down and cleaving up. Or were you for an ordinary place in God's building, it were enough to have paſſed the Saw and the Ax; but now that God beſtoweth ſo much work upon you, 'tis an argument you muſt ſtand in a more conſpicuous place, and perhaps in the front of

the building. 'Tis obſervable, that whomſoever God hath made inſtances of ſuch eminent diſtreſſes, he hath made them inſtances of as eminent uſefulneſs; as *Job*, *David*, *Hezekiah*, *&c.* in the Old Teſtament, and *Paul* in the New, who was troubled on every ſide, within were fears as without were fightings: 2 *Cor.*7.5. Thoſe metals are intended for a ſignal uſe, which are often caſt into the fire. Such exigencies do ſtock us with experiences. And experience gives wiſdom, enlargeth the underſtanding and receptive powers, and ſo enableth, yea ennobleth for the higheſt undertakings. 1. Perhaps it may be to prepare you for a paſſive ſtate, and make way to the condition and crown of Chriſts eminent Confeſſors, and glorious Martyrs. You that have felt greater will not fear ſuch leſſer evils. The world will ſeem little in your eyes to part with for God and his glory that could do nothing for you, when God was angry, and ſeems little or nothing to you, in compariſon with him appeaſed. We read of none in the New Teſtament that did equal *Paul* in thoſe inward fears, and he ſeems to excell all in inward fortitude. He that was moſt ſad did beſt and moſt ſuffer: 2 *Cor.*7.5. 4. 8, 9, 10, 11, 16, *&c.* *Act.*20. 24. *c.*21.13. 2 *Cor.*11.23.------28. 2. Perhaps it may be to prepare you for an active ſtate. 1. To be for eminent conduct in the Church, as *Job*, *David* and *Hezekiah* were. God may intend you, not for paſſengers only to ſave your ſelves, but for Pilots to ſteer the Ship, and ſave others; who muſt be acquainted with the practice, as well

well as art of navigation; and experimentally know how to take the height and depth; what are the Seas and Shores, where the rocks and ſands, and on what point of the Compaſs the wind ſets, *&c.* 2. Or perhaps for the eminent comfort of his choſen, that you may be able with *Paul* to comfort others in any trouble, with the ſame comforts wherewith you were comforted of God. God may intend you for a monument of Conſolation, to the Chriſtians about you; and therefore hews and cuts you thus, that he may prepare and poliſh you for this excellent employment, and perſwade them to the entertainment of what you have experimented. I will tell you what he hath done for my Soul, is uſually an effectual argument: 2 *Cor.* 1. 4, 6. *Pſal.* 34. 4. ----8. *&* 66. 16. How ſhould this quiet you! The ax and the hammer are but to fit you for and faſten you to your place in the building. God hath ſome high ends by theſe hard exigencies. They neither come, nor are like to go away empty handed. *Joſeph* is ſold into *Egypt*, a ſlave in it, a ſtrait priſoner, *&c.* But all tendeth to his publick uſefulneſs and perſonal good. How know you but you may find cauſe of calling your firſt-born (after theſe troubles) *Manaſſeh* as he did? *For God* (ſaid he) *hath made me forget all my toil, and all my fathers houſe:* Gen. 41. 51.

Q. 15.

Q. 15. *What if the Soul be running, or run down into deſpair, how may we prevent or recover it?*

* *Perkins vol. 2. p. 365.*

There is a pious deſpair (an holy deſperation as one * calls it) which driveth us out of our ſelves to draw in the ſuccours of Grace. As thoſe that can never hope to attain Salvation by any ſtrength, ſufficience, works, or worth of our own. This ſhould be kept up and cheriſhed, as that which quickens and carrieth the Soul to God in Chriſt: 2 *Cor.* 3. 4, 5. 1 *Pet.* 1. 21. *Phil.* 3. 7, 8, 9. But there is alſo a paſſionate and perverſe deſpair, which driveth the Soul from that ſupream power and goodneſs, by which alone it can arrive to ſalvation and reſt. 'Tis of this that we are attempting the cure. Now this ariſeth out of a miſrepreſentation to themſelves, partly of their own condition, and principally of the object in and from whom, or the object by and through whom, they ſhould hope for Salvation, as if they were not able to beſtow it, or not willing. As then you would prevent this ſore evil,

Direct. 1. Put off thy diſtempered paſſions and put on thy reaſon. Immoderate fears and ſorrows will but hide the ſuccours wherewith hope is wont to be ſuſtained from ſenſe, or betray them unto Satan. And like ſtrong winds to a ſtirring Sea, will make Conſcience riſe the more highly, and rave the more inceſſantly, and reject both the comforts and reproofs which are brought her. What is my ſtrength

ſtrength that I ſhould hope? Do ye imagin to reprove words and the ſpeeches of one that is deſperate? *Job* 6. 11, 26. Remember thou art a man that is put under the ducture of reaſon, and not under the power of brutiſh paſſions. The inſpiration of the Almighty hath given thee underſtanding. May not Reaſon ſay to thee as *Elihu* to *Job*, (how much more may Religion ſay it?) *If thou canſt anſwer me, ſet thy words in order before me, ſtand up*, Job 32.8, *c.* 33.5. What cauſe is there for this uproar? Why art thou ſo reſtleſs, O my Soul? why in this rage? Haſt thou not a God to run unto? Yea, hear him, *Come now and let us reaſon together, though your ſins be as ſcarlet, they ſhall be as white as ſnow; though they be red like crimſon, they ſhall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, &c.* If, why art thou diſquieted, O my Soul? cannot be anſwered before the Bar of Reaſon, much leſs will this queſtion, Why art thou diſtracted, O my Soul? why art thou deſpairing? Let reaſon gird on her ſtrength for the battle, and hold the ballance in weighing thy condition, and how will thy paſſions flee before it, like the duſt before the wind? *Iſaiah* 1. 18, 19. *Pſal.* 42. 5.

Direct. 2. Preſent thy eſtate aright unto thy ſelf, at leaſt as right as reaſon may help thee to ſet it. This miſchief groweth out of the miſrepreſentation of us to our ſelves, in looking upon it through a wrong *medium*. We look upon it through a red or flame-coloured glaſs, and ſo all things look to us as if they were all blood,

blood, or in a flame. So *Job*, *My days are paſt*, (ſaith he) *my purpoſes are broken off, even the thoughts or poſſeſſions of my heart, &c. And where is now my hope? as for my hope, who ſhall ſee it?* Job 17. 11.----15. Two things I adviſe thee. Preſent that eſtate wherein thou remaineſt aright to thee, and whereinto thou art run, or running. The ſtate wherein thou remaineſt. Here uſe the looking-glaſs if thou wilt, but not the multiplying glaſs; as *Cain* doth, enhancing the deſperateneſs of his ſtate, beyond the denounced ſentence of God: *Gen.*4.13,14. Nay *Job* and *Heman* we find daſhing upon this rock. He look'd upon himſelf as a man that had no ſtrength, free among the dead; as if he were enfranchiſed of the grave already; whereas he was in a ſtate of life, ſeeking and lamenting after God: *Job* 3. & 6. & 10. & 19. 6,7, *&c. Pſal.* 18. 4, 5. *cum* 1. 2, 13. Is thy eſtate an eſtate of grace? the cure is promiſed, Omnipotency is engaged for it: *Iſa.* 57. 16.----20. *c.* 40. 27.----31. 48. 8, 9, 10. Is it the eſtate of nature? yet the cure is poſſible. *Manaſſeh*, *Magdalen* and others, whoſe ſins were more ſinful, whoſe ſtate was more ſad, have been actually cured. Haſt thou been a blaſphemer, a perſecutor, injurious? So was *Paul*, yet he obtained mercy, and for this cauſe, *that he might be a pattern to them which ſhould hereafter believe*, 1 Tim. 1. 13, 16. If thou wilt but yet return, though thou haſt been weary of God, and wearying of him hitherto, and made him to ſerve with thy ſins, yet he will return and ſave thee; not for thy ſake, but for his

his own ſake: *Iſa.* 43. 22.-------26. *Zach.* 1. 3. *Jer.* 3. 12, 13, 14. *Ezek.* 36. 22.------33. Is thy eſtate an eſtate of great diſcomfort? yet not of grievous deſpair, at leaſt in the root and reaſon of it. While life remaineth there is ſtill reaſon and room for hope. Say you, you have a name that you live? but you are like *Sardis*, in deed and truth dead, dead as to any ſpiritual life; yet *Sardis* is not ſhaken off. Behold, the Goſpel informs you, that the dead ſhall hear the voice of the Son of God and live. Yea, it inviteth, inciteth, incourageth you. *Awake thou that ſleepeſt, and ariſe from the dead, and Chriſt ſhall give thee light*, Eccleſ. 9. 4. Rev. 3. 1, *&c.* Joh. 5. 25. Epheſ. 5. 14. Ah! but our bones are dried up, our hope is loſt, we are cut off for our parts. Why? Till your days are cut off, the door of hope ſtands open. All the day long he ſtretcheth out his hands to a rebellious people. *Yea, thus ſaith the Lord God to theſe bones, I will cauſe breath to enter into you, and ye ſhall live. I will open your graves and cauſe you to come up out of your graves.* It was ſpoken to *Iſrael* to revive their dead hopes of their Civil State; but is applicable to us likewiſe, for reſtoring our hopes in any Spiritual ſtrait, if other Scriptures be compared with it: *Iſa.* 65. 2. *Ezek.* 37. 5, 11, 12. *Rom.* 4. 17. 2 *Cor.* 1. 8, 9, 10. *Eph.* 2. 1, 5.

(2) Preſent the eſtate whereinto thou art running, aright to thee, which ſhall be a *third Direction.* Will deſpair make thy ſins leſs? or thy ſtate better? 'Tis as if thou wouldſt flie from the Sheep to the Dog, or from the Dog *Direct.* 3.

Dog to the Wolf, or from either to the roaring Lion, or the ravening Bear; from food to physick, from physick to poyson. Thou that art fleeing from the iron weapon, the bow of steel shall strike thorow. Over what a cliff art thou casting thy self headlong? Into what a gulf of extreamest sorrows and sin, art thou contumaciously hastening?

(1) Into what a gulf of sorrows? Hope deferred maketh the heart sick; but hope denied maketh the heart swoon and sink away. 'Tis as if you would throw away your Anchor that you may ride out the tempest. Hope rests and reposeth the mind, and freeth it from all such anxieties as arise out of the floating, instability, and fearfulness thereof, (as one well *). When Hope is gone Happiness goeth with it, and instead of these what terrour cometh? that maketh the heart as it were an hell upon earth, and maketh the man a *Magormizabib*, a terrour round about. The Heart which was wont to be the habitation of delights, is now become the habitation of dragons, of trembling sorrows, and tormenting fears. The wild beasts of the desert, Satan and his accomplices, do here meet with the wild beasts of the Island, a mans own Soul. The Satyrs dance here, and cry to their fellows. The shritch owls hatch and gather under their shadow. The Vultures also be gathered together, every one with his mate: *Prov.*13. 12. *Lam.*3.17,18,19. *Psal.* 18.4,5. & 86.13. & 116. 3. *Isa.* 34. 14, 15. *c.* 13. 21, 22. I want words to express the misery of this estate.

*Dr. *Reynolds Pas. sions. c.* 25.

eſtate. O! the boiling oyl, and ſcalding lead that Conſcience is pouring out upon the other powers! The *Ætna* of ſulphureous flames that they pour back upon Conſcience! Whatever be the dreadful effects to which an heightned fancy may boil up our inflamed angers, griefs, terrours, they may be expected here. Soul conſider, whither, whither, thou art precipitating thy ſelf; from diſtreſs unto deſpair. Deſpair? this one word ſhould ſtop thee. *If thou haſt run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, how ſhalt thou contend with horſes?* If thou durſt not venture the ſmall rivulet of diſtreſs, what wilt thou do in the ſwelling of the *Jordan* of deſpair? Canſt thou fight *Goliah*, that falleſt before a ſtripling? Whilſt thou art fleeing hither from the iron weapon, a bow of ſteel ſhall ſtrike thee thorow; the gliſtering ſword cometh out of thy gall. Inſtead of leſſer troubles, behold greater terrours. Take up betimes then: Reaſon bids thee of two evils that thou chuſe the leaſt. That thou run not from bad to worſe, that for fleeing of the fear thou ſhouldſt not fall into the pit and ſnare: *Jer.* 12. 5. *Job* 20. 24, 25. *Jer.* 48. 44. *Iſa.* 24. 18.

(2) Into what a gulf of ſin art thou falling? 'Tis a Queſtion in the Schools, Whether unbelief, deſpair, or hatred of God be the greateſt ſin. *Aquinas* * reſolves it, That deſpair is the greateſt *quantum ad nos*, the other *ſecundum ſe*. The truth is, that deſpair is always incluſive of the other two, though they are not always incluſive of it. Deſpair ariſeth out of unbe-

* 22*a. q.* 20. *a.* 3.

lief,

lief, and is ſtill accompanied therewith as hope ariſeth out of faith. Neither is there in deſpair
* ib. a. 1. only a privation of hope *, but there is an averſion, at leaſt a retreat from the object hoped for, and from God the object hoped in, as either unable or unwilling to give it, and ſo there is an hatred of God that goeth with it, either negative (if I may ſo phraſe it) as in the pious, a want of love, at leaſt to that degree which is due to him. Or poſitive, as in the impenitent, and was in *Cain* and others. O! how many ſins are there in this one ſin! how many that attend upon it! What horrible infidelity! as if there were more in ſin to damn us than in God and Chriſt to ſave us. What height of ingratitude to God! for his Chriſt, and the Covenant of his grace, and for all thoſe means he hath afforded for awakening our hopes, and attaining of happineſs! What horrid imputations to and blaſphemy of God! In making our guilt more omnipotent than his power, and ſin more hurtful than he is good and helpful! What haughty inſolency againſt God and his Goſpel! in juſtifying themſelves and Satan, in ſaying our Salvation is impoſſible; when both of them ſpeak it poſſible and proffer it upon eaſie terms! What odious indignity is there offered unto Chriſt! as if the cry of our ſins did outvoice the cry of his blood, or there were not either worth enough in it, or not a willingneſs to impart it, though he left his father, took our fleſh, *&c.* to this very purpoſe. What open injury do we offer to the Church! as if there were no

Balm

Balm in *Gilead*, and the buſineſs, and bleſſings of religion were but a mockery, as ending in madneſs and melancholy! Yea, how ominous is the injury hereby to our own ſelves, as barring us out, not only from preſent happineſs, but from all poſſibilities and hopes, and bringing us into the moſt amazing agonies of 1. temptation, 2. tribulation, 3. tranſgreſſion!

1. Of temptation. Deſpair is the Devil's ſhop and ſhambles. By this he puts men upon blaſpheming God, and ſelf-butcheries. Witneſs *Cain*, *Saul*, and *Judas*: *Gen.* 4. 13, 14. 1 *Sam.* 31. 4. *cum* 16. 14. *Mat.* 27. 5. *cum Joh.* 13. 27.

2. Of Tribulation. Nothing but now miniſters matter of trouble to the Soul. Even God, his Goſpel, *&c.* And they multiply upon him. I was not in ſafety, neither had I reſt, neither was I quiet, yet trouble came. yea, there is a ſpecial malignity in theſe troubles; not only in that they are ſoul-troubles, but ſelf-troubles, troubles of his own making, and maintaining. He is his own tormenter. *Job.* 3. 26. *Jer.* 2. 19.

3. Of Tranſgreſſion. Now is the time of ſinning moſt againſt God, our ſelves, and the ſoul-good of our neighbour, hardening the wicked, hindring the weak, and intercepting the worthieſt in the cheerfulneſs of their progreſs and pilgrimage. The effects I acknowledg are different in different perſons:

1. It enervates endeavours in moſt. As the Orator * long ſince obſerved. Hope is the nerve and tendon of Action, if this be cut off

* *Deſperatione debilitati experiri nolunt, quod ſe aſſequi poſſe diffidunt.* Cic. Orat. ad Brut.

off or contracted, they are diſenabled and indiſpoſed. Men care not to make experiments for that, of which they conclude they ſhall never come at.

2. It eateth cut the ſweet, and extinguiſheth the Spirit and heat of endeavours, if they are continued. Cut off hope, and the ſprings of joy, and holy obedience are dammed up. Servile fears prevail, and ſo duty doth become a drudgery, and comes off with difficulty. 'Tis worſe rowing than againſt wind and tide.

3. It inflameth ſome unto ſelf-violence. *Saul* falls upon his own Sword, *Ahitophel* and *Judas* hang themſelves, and ſo paſs from one hell to another.

4. It exaſperateth ſome againſt God and Godlineſs, and boils up their hatred to malice and deſpight, as *Cain* and *Jehoram*'s meſſenger, *What ſhall I attend on the Lord any longer?*

5. It endeth with ſome in ſenſuality, and Epicurean or brutiſh indulgences, to make the beſt of their gain in carnal divertiſements while they may. As thoſe *Jer.*2.25. *c.*18.12. 1 *Cor.* 15.32. *There is no hope, we will walk after our own devices. Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we ſhall die.*

Direct. 4. Preſent the Object, in and from whom you can alone hope for peace and ſafety more rightly to your Conſcience. Is it not enough that you have hard thoughts of your ſelves? but will you have hard thoughts of our God likewiſe? O the zeal! the ſtrength, the ſounding of his bowels, and of his mer-

ceis

cies towards thee? Are they reſtrained? Hath he not proclaimed his Name, to be the Lord, the LordGod, merciful and gracious, long-ſuffering, and abundant in goodneſs and truth? keeping mercy for thouſands, forgiving iniquity, tranſgreſſion and ſin? Yea, the Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works. He is full of compaſſion and gracious, long-ſuffering and plenteous in mercy and truth: *Iſa.* 63. 15. *Exod.* 34. 6, 7. *Pſal.* 86, 5, 15. & 103. 8. & 145. 8, 9. Whence then are theſe approaches toward deſpair? O thou trembling ſoul, whence, why do theſe tormenting thoughts ſtick upon thee? Is it that God cannot, is not able to pardon thee? Nay, what is too hard for an omnipotent mercy to pardon, or paſs by? Man can put up but a few provocations, ſuch is his impotence; through pride, paſſion, &c. He cannot contain, but would be calling for fire from heaven. But God hath proclaimed his Name to be יהוה יהוה אל *the Lord, the Lord, the mighty God* *. His Omnipotence can forgive both iniquity, tranſgreſſion and ſin; all kinds, all degrees of ſin: *Luk.* 9. 54. *Exod. ibid. Numb.* 14. 18, 19, 20. *Amos* 7. 2, 3. What! is it that he careth not, is not willing to forgive and have mercy upon thee? *Nay, as I live, ſaith the Lord, I have no pleaſure in the death of the wicked; but* (this is his pleaſure) *that the wicked turn from his way and live.* Lo, how he invites, injoyns, intreats it. *Turn you, turn you, from your evill ways.* How he expoſtulateth in it, *why will ye die?* God is not willing that any ſhould

* *Deus fortis.* Jun. & Tremel.

periſh, but that all ſhould come to repentance. Behold he is ready to pardon (*Hebr.* a God of pardons) gracious, merciful ſlow to anger and of great kindneſs: *Ezek.* 33. 11. *c.* 18. 32. 2 *Pet.* 3. 9. *Neh.* 9. 17. I know thou lookeſt upon him as clothed with righteouſneſs, and armed with omnipotent juſtice to revenge thy diſobedience. And 'tis true he is ſo if thou ſhalt perſiſt in thy ſins. But wilt thou revolve theſe few queſtions in thy heart, and return an anſwer to them in thy own boſom?

1. Is not Omnipotent mercy as propenſe and willing to ſave thee, as Omnipotent juſtice is to damn thee? Have I any pleaſure at all that the wicked ſhould die, ſaith the Lord God; and not that he ſhould return from his ways and live? He doth not (ſo much as) afflict willingly. Judgment is his ſtrange work; but he rejoyceth to ſhew mercy. He is as it were drawn to acts of juſtice, but he delighteth in acts of mercy: *Ezek.* 18. 23. *Lam.* 3. 33. *Iſa.* 28. 21. *Jer.* 32. 41. *Mic.* 7. 18. Why then ſuch confuſion of heart? Why doſt thou caſt away thine hope? why ſhouldſt thou fear and fly from him as one that will not forgive, when there is forgiveneſs with him, that he may be feared? *Pſal.* 130. 4, 7.

2. Is not Omnipotent mercy as prevalent with him to ſave thee, as juſtice is or can be to damn thee? Behold mercy rejoyceth againſt judgment. Acts of mercy flow freely from him, they are of his own meer will and motion. He hath mercy becauſe he will have mercy.

cy. Acts of juſtice have their foundation ſtill without him, and are laid in the deſert of ſin. Juſtice requireth deſert. Mercy remitteth deſert, and requireth only diſtreſs or defect, and knows no motive out of its own ſelf. Mercy doth not extend it ſelf upon any former obligations, or upon any future hopes. Its acts are all free, and both from and for it ſelf. How marvellous muſt the influence of mercy then be, that is not raiſed upon the goodneſs or worth of the ſinner, but upon the good will of himſelf! Yea, when juſtice ſeems ready to ſtrike, mercy ſtays its arm, and that for its own ſake, when there is nothing but miſery and neceſſity can be ſuggeſted for the ſinners ſake: *Jam.* 2. 13. *Rom.* 9. 15, 16. *Job* 37. 23. *Pſal.* 78. 38, 39. *Iſa.* 48. 9. Behold then, the foulneſs and merit of thy ſins is ſupererogated by the freeneſs and ſuper-abundance of his mercies.

3. Hath not Omnipotent mercy provided and done more in order to thy Salvation then juſtice hath for thy damnation? Yea, he hath ſent his Son to ſave thee, if thou wilt accept of him; his ſervants by office to ſhew thee the way of Salvation if thou wilt attend them, his Scriptures and Ordinances to skill thee in, and work in thee the things that accompany Salvation, if thou wilt improve and obey them. And nothing can damn thee but thy impenitence in ſin. Hath juſtice done as much to fit thee for hell, as mercy hath to fit thee for heaven. Now the deſigns of all his acts of juſtice are but to drive thee to

the acceptance of his mercies. If juſtice threatens, 'tis that ſhe may not puniſh; or if ſhe puniſh here, 'tis that ſhe may not puniſh for ever. If thou art judged of the Lord, 'tis that thou mayſt not be condemned with the world: *Joh.* 3.16. *Act.* 16. 17. *c.* 13. 26. *Tit.* 2. 11. 1 *Cor.* 11. 32. Oh! turn thy amazing fears of juſtice, into admirings and hopes of mercy.

4. Hath not Omnipotent mercy hitherto preponderated the proceeds of juſtice toward you? Yea, 'tis not for want of might, but of meer will and mercy that he hath hitherto forborn you, and that your forfeited ſouls, ſtates, *&c.* have not been fearfully ſnatcht from you, by ſome ſignal arreſt of divine vengeance. Hath he not indured you with much long-ſuffering? Could finite mercies have put up a thouſandth part of ſuch continued injuries and indignities? What bowels, what bounties of mercies have yearned on you, and been extended to you! why ſhould not Conſcience reflect and ſay, may not the ſame mercy at laſt ſave me, that hath ſo long ſpared me? yea, and it will ſave you if you will yet ſhake off your ſins and ſubmit to its terms. Nay this is the very end of it (Oh may it ſo end in you!) Account that the long-ſuffering of God is Salvation in the end and deſign of it. He waits that he may be gracious unto you. *Return, and I will not cauſe mine anger to fall upon you, for I am merciful, ſaith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever,* Rom. 9. 22. *c.* 2. 4. 2 Pet. 3.15. Iſa. 30.18. Jer. 3.12.

5. Doth

5. Doth not Omnipotent mercy proffer and perſwade you to imbrace its Propoſitions of Salvation, and to prevent the ominous ſtrokes of provoked juſtice? yea, God will have all men to be ſaved. The grace of God that bringeth Salvation to all men hath appeared. Lo, he proffers it to all. Whoſoever will, Ho, every one that thirſteth. He preſſeth it upon all; whoſoever thirſteth let him come, let him come, let him come. 'Tis urged yet a fourth time, Encline your ear and come to me. He perſwadeth it. Here are waters, here is wine, here is milk, here is bread for you; whatſoever may raiſe your natures, or relieve your neceſſities. Here is the good which you ſeek after, and which alone can ſatisfie you. He prevents the exceptions, whereupon men ſtand off, its worth and their unworthineſs. Come, buy without money, and without price. He pleads and expoſtulates, *wherefore will ye ſpend your money for that which is not bread? &c. Why will ye die?* Yea, he prayeth and entreateth by his Ambaſſadors, *as though God did beſeech you by us, we pray you to be reconciled.* Loſt man do but ſuffer me to ſave thee, poor ſinner ſuffer me to love thee. Theſe are the charms (as one ſaith *) of Goſpel rhetorick: 1 *Tim.* 2. 4. *Tit.* 2. 11. *Rev.* 22, 17. *Iſa.* 55. 1, 2, 3. 2 *Cor.* 5. 20. Shall your diffidence and deſpair turn the deaf ear to all this? and fruſtrate both God's deſign and your own deſires to all eternity.

* *Manton on Jude, v.* 2. *p.* 75.

6. Hath Omnipotent juſtice ever condemned any under the publication of the Goſpel, but upon the neglect or refuſal of the offers

of Omniptent mercy? No mercy muſt diſclaim you ere juſtice can damn you. Vindictive juſtice muſt have the permit (at leaſt) of divine mercy, ere it can ſo puniſh. This, this is the condemnation,- the neglect of that great Salvation mercy ſhews us, the miſerable refuſals and abuſe of the riches of mercy. Mercy never refuſeth till men refuſe. What ſay you? are you willing to be at peace, and friends with that God, to whom you ſay, you have been ſo long enemies? Never were there any who were willing to accept the conditions of mercy, and to accord the quarrel of juſtice, that mercy hath abandoned, or juſtice arreſted, and caſt into hell-torments. If you are but willing, truly, throughly willing, be you never ſo weak, or have you been never ſo wicked, mercy hath a wing to cover you, and clucks after you as her chicken: 2 *Chron.* 36. 16. *Joh.* 3. 20. *Heb.* 2. 3. *Rom.* 2. 4, 5. *Iſa.* 1. 19. *Mat.* 23. 37.

7. Once more, who are the Objects of Omnipotent mercy but ſuch as are in miſery? Mercy is an attribute whoſe aſpect is ever toward the Creature. God knoweth himſelf, loveth himſelf, but is not merciful to himſelf. And 'tis miſery is the object of mercy, as the ſole motive of beſtowing mercy is his own free mercy. So that the calamitouſneſs of thy condition ſhould not be abuſed to keep thee from mercy, but uſed as an argument rather to awaken and quicken thee to the ſpeedieſt cloſe with mercy. Here maiſt thou unload thy burdens, and eaſe thy miſerable breaſt. The

Lord

Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy. With him is a multitude of tender mercies. Whither can you look but to mercy, if you will not ſtill live in miſery? Now here is work for ſaving mercy in the ſenſe of thy miſery. Juſtice looks what your merits are, but mercy looks what your miſeries are. Be not diſcouraged, ſin and miſery are the moſt ſtrong and ſuitable arguments whereby to plead for mercy. For now you preſent God with the proper object of mercy, which you pray him to magnifie. You have the example of his Worthies to encourage you. *Lord, be merciful to me, heal my ſoul, for I have ſinned againſt thee. Be merciful unto me, O Lord, for I am poor and needy. Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak. O Lord, heal me, for my bones are vexed. My ſoul alſo is ſore vexed, O ſave me for thy mercies ſake*, Exod. 33. 19. Jam. 5. 11. Pſal. 51. 1. & 41. 4. & 86. 1, 3. 6. 1.---5.

Direct. 5. Preſent the Object by and through whom we can only hope for Salvation aright to you, the Lord Chriſt. His very name is argument enough to refell deſpair, revive hope, and raiſe both deſire and delight. His name *Jeſus* Lets thee ſee, what he is to his, and what he will be to thee, if thou wilt believe in him a Saviour from thy ſins: *Mat.* 1. 21. *Act.* 16. 31. 1 *Tim.* 4. 10. Away with thy ſtrait and narrow conceptions of the bleſſed Jeſus. The Angel tells us, *This is good tydings of great joy which ſhall be to all people, that there is born a Saviour which is Chriſt the Lord.*

Lord. The Apoſtles teſtifie that God ſent his Son to be the Saviour of the world. And if you attend his own ſayings, he aſſureth you, *I came not to judg the world but to ſave the world.* And God ſent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be ſaved: *Luk.* 2. 10. 1 *Joh.* 4. 14, *Joh.* 12.47. *c.* 3. 17. What is it then that ſticks with you? Do you think him either 1. averſe that he will not, or 2. not able, and ſo cannot ſave ſo vile a ſinner as thou art, though thou ſubmit unto him. Behold Chriſt is able to ſave them to the uttermoſt that come unto God by him, εἰς τὸ παντελὲς, *prorſus, perpetuò & perfectè*, as * *Gryneus* giveth it us.

* *ad* Heb. 7. 25.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Queſt. *Whether we ſhould direct our Prayers, only to God the Father? or may alſo to the Son, and to the Holy Ghoſt? And how may we order our thoughts aright, in diſtinguiſhing theſe three perſons, eſpecially as to prayer?*

MOſt dear and worthy Friend, I willingly own the obligations you have put upon me, to God and you: And ſhall rejoyce to ſerve you, or if this may ſatisfie you, I ſhall not premiſe any needleſs Preface to what this paper offers you. Your conceſſions in our late Conference, I ſhall not ſo much prove, as improve. The queſtion you would be clear in being complicate, I ſhall take aſunder, and tender you what ſatisfaction I may from the holy Scriptures, without the acceſſion of humane Authors; as knowing that your faith doth not indeed, ſhould not ſtand in the wiſdom of men, but in the power of God: 1 *Cor.*2.5.

Queſt. 1. *Whether we ſhould direct our prayers only to God the Father, or may alſo to the Son, and to the Holy Ghoſt?*

Anſw. I affirm we may direct our Prayers to any of them, and ſhould direct our Prayers to all theſe three perſons, in the one moſt ſingle and undivided Godhead. To this purpoſe pleaſe to peruſe theſe enſuing Propoſitions.

Prop. 1.

Prop. 1. God is the object of prayer, the adequate and alone object. His commands (as alſo your conceſſions) determine our prayers to and upon him, who is God by nature, upon him, and upon no other: *Mat.*4.10. *Pſal.* 50. 15. *&* 65.2. *Gal.* 4. 8. *Pſal.* 44. 20, 21. So that the proper, fundamental and formal reaſon of divine worſhip is the perfect and infinite excellency of the eternal Godhead.

Prop. 2. The Godhead, which is and can be but one, there being but one firſt cauſe and laſt end: *Deut.* 6. 4. *Epheſ.* 4. 6. *Iſa.* 41. 4. *c.* 44. 6, 8. ſubſiſts in Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt, without any diviſion of that moſt ſingle eſſence; yet with diſtinction of theſe ſeveral perſons. This (as your ſelf concedes, ſo) theſe Scriptures clear: 1 *Joh.* 5.7. *Mat.* 28.19. *c.* 3.16,17. *Deut.*6.4. *Jehovah, Elohim.* So that as the Father is God: [*Rom.* 15, 6. *c* 1.7.] So alſo is the Son: [1 *Joh.*5.20. 1 *Tim.*3.16. *Act.*20.28.] And ſo likewiſe is the Holy Ghoſt: [*Act.* 5. 3, 4. 1 *Cor.* 3. 16, 17. *c.* 12. 6, 7, 8.] Three diſtinct perſons they are, but one and the ſame God. *There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt, and theſe three* (its not ſaid, *ver.* 8. agree in one, but) *are one.* Not only do they agree in one teſtimony, but are one in truth, one thing, one nature, one God: καὶ οἱ τρεῖς ἓν εἰσι, 1 *Joh.* 5. 7. I ſhould further expatiate in clearing this truth, but that you have already evidenced your clearneſs in it.

Prop. 3. The Son, and Holy Ghoſt being one God, co-equal and co-eſſential with the Father,

Father, divine honour and our dues of office, as prayer, *&c.* are to be deferred therefore, and given unto them, as well as to the Father. This is eminently enough pointed to us in that prayer of *Benediction* which was preſcribed unto the Prieſts: [*Numb.* 6. 23.-----27.] Wherein they muſt thrice iterate, *The Lord, the Lord, the Lord bleſs thee, &c.* But it is evidently and expreſly pattern'd in that prayer of *Valediction*, 2 *Cor.* 13. 14. *The grace of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the love of God*; i.e. the Father, *and the communion of the Holy Ghoſt be with you all, Amen.* The practice of *John* may be produced likewiſe in that proemial prayer for, and ſalutation of the Seven Churches: *Rev.* 1. 4, 5. *Grace be unto you, and peace from him, which is, and which was, and which is to come,* (a frequent periphraſis of the Father) *and from the Seven Spirits which are before his throne, (i.e.* the Holy Ghoſt, the variety and perfection of whoſe Graces in theſe Seven *Aſian* Churches is hereby indicated, he being but one and the ſelf-ſame ſpirit: 1 *Cor.* 12. 4, 11.) *and from Jeſus Chriſt who is the faithful witneſs, &c.* Shall I need to ſubjoyn what you may perhaps already ſenſe and conſider? That Baptiſm is to be miniſtred in the name of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt, as well as in the name of the Father: *Mat.* 28. 19.

Prop. 4. God the Father then is not, cannot be ſo the object of prayer, as is excluſive either of God the Son, or of God the Holy Ghoſt.

(1) *For the Son.* It is manifeſt, that all men ſhould

ſhould honour the Son, even as they honour the Father, *He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father*, Joh. 5. 23. If you'l review the laſt prayer of that lively Protomartyr *Steven*, it is directed hither, *They ſtoned Steven, calling upon God, and ſaying, Lord Jeſus receive my ſpirit*, Act. 7. 59. He that runs may read the ſame requeſts from the beloved Diſciple of Chriſt, and from his bride the Church, which conclude our Bibles, *Come, come Lord Jeſus, &c. Rev.* 22. 17, 20, 21. *Lord, remember me when thou comeſt into thy Kingdom*, is the only recorded prayer of the penitent thief upon the Croſs: *Luk.* 23. 42, 43. *Paul* begins (well-nigh) every Epiſtle with prayers to him, as well as to the Father: *Rom.* 1. 7. 1 *Cor.* 1. 3. 2 *Cor.* 1. 2, *&c.* And is followed herein, both by *John* and *Peter*, 2 *Joh.* 3. 2. 2 *Pet.* 1. 2. In ſhort, this is given us as the character of all true Chriſtians, 1 *Cor.* 1. 2. *Act.* 9. 14. *With all that call upon the name of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* Obſerve, it is not ſaid, That call upon the name of the Lord, through Jeſus Chriſt; though this is (no doubt) their duty, and his due, as being the Mediator. It lets us ſee, that his Saints look upon him not only as a middle perſon, through whom they pray unto God, but as true and very God, to whom they make their prayers.

(2) *For the Holy Ghoſt.* We are debters in point of prayer to him, as he alſo deriveth all our grace and peace to us. *We are debters* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *not to the fleſh, but to the ſpirit*; and this not only to live after the ſpirit, but

to

to lift up our hearts with our hands to him, in ſpirit and truth. *O come* (ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*) *let us worſhip and bow down, Let us kneel before the Lord our maker; for he is our God, &c.* Pſal. 95. 6, 7, 8. The Apoſtle maketh application of this part of the *Pſalm* to the Holy Ghoſt, *Heb.* 3. 7, 8, *&c.* External and internal worſhip is due then from us to God the Holy Ghoſt. The reaſon which the *Pſalmiſt* gives us, reach him as well as the other perſons. *He is the Lord our God he made us, and not we our ſelves. The ſpirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the almighty hath given me life. The inſpiration of the almighty hath given me underſtanding*, Job 33. 4. *c.* 32. 8. *Know ye not* (ſaith *Paul*) *that your bodies are the temples of the holy ghoſt?* Which he elſewhere maketh ſynonimous with being the temples of God. What then? *Therefore glorifie God in your bodies, and in your ſpirits, which are Gods*; and therefore glorifie God the Holy Ghoſt. So that inward and outward worſhip not only may, but muſt be given to the Holy Ghoſt: 1 *Cor.* 6. 19, 20. *c.* 3. 16, 17. The Saints of God have offered him therefore their prayers of petition, (ſee inſtances *Prop.* 3.) and the Seraphims do offer him their prayers of praiſe and thanksgiving, *Crying holy, holy, holy Lord God almighty*; which with expreſs warrant enough is interpretable to the Holy Ghoſt, and not to be limited to one, or both the other perſons: *Iſa.* 6. 3, 9. with *Act.* 28. 25, 26. Shall I add more evidence where there is ſo much already? Lo,

1. The objective fundamental and formal ground

ground of prayer is found with the Son, and with the Holy Ghoſt, as well as with the Father. Is the Father God? ſo is the Son. *God over all, bleſſed for ever*, Rom. 9. 5. And the Holy Ghoſt is called God, not leſs than three times in one Scripture, 1 *Cor.* 3.16,17. I forbear ampler teſtimonies, becauſe you acknowledg this fundamental truth. Is the Father an omnipreſent majeſty, pray we where we will? ſo is the Son alſo. Hear him, *Whereſoever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midſt of them*, Mat. 18. 20. So likewiſe is the Holy Ghoſt. *Whither ſhall I go from thy ſpirit*, ſaith the *Pſalmiſt? i.e.* I can go no whither, but thy ſpirit is with me, *Pſal.*139.7. Is the Father an omnipotent mercy? pray we for what we will, he is able to hear and help us. So alſo is the Son, the mighty God, the almighty, *Iſa.* 9. 6. *Rev.* 1. 7, 8. And ſo likewiſe is the Holy Ghoſt. All theſe worketh that one and the ſelf-ſame ſpirit, dividing to every man as he will, 1 *Cor.* 12. 11. Briefly, is the Father omniſcient? knowing what we pray for, how we pray, what are the purpoſes of, and what principles are at act in our hearts, and in what proportion, and when it is beſt to anſwer our prayers, and to accommodate our deſires and diſtreſſes. So is the Son, he knoweth what is in man, the very heart and reins, he knoweth all things, *Joh.*2.24, 25. *c.*21.17. *Rev.* 2. 23. And ſo alſo is the Holy Ghoſt, he ſearcheth all things, yea the deep things of God, 1 *Cor.*2.10,11,12.

2. For the object of faith. Is it the Father only?

only? Nay ſo is God the Son, and God the Holy Ghoſt. And if the object of faith then of prayer alſo, *Rom.* 10. 14, *Mat.* 28. 19. That the Son is the object of faith ſeems to require little or no proof with him that believes the Scriptures. Since they were written to this very end, that we might believe in the name of the Son of God, and that believing we might have life through his name, *Joh.* 20. 31. 1 *Joh.* 5. 13. And he that disbelieveth or denieth this, disbelieveth or denieth the Father alſo, 1 *Joh.* 2. 22, 23, 24. Here was the bleſſed faith of *Peter*, the rock, the bottom, or foundation upon which the Church is built; *Mat.* 16. 16, 17, 18. Hitherto alſo our bleſſed Saviour calleth his. *Ye believe in God, believe alſo in me*, Joh. 14. 1. The Holy Ghoſt is the object of faith likewiſe. I believe in the Holy Ghoſt is one, and an eminent article of the true Creed of Chriſtians. Plain it is, that the wiſdom of the Spirit is the wiſdom of God, the power of the Spirit is the power of God, the teſtimony of the Spirit is the teſtimony of God. And if we may and ſhould believe the witneſs of men, much more the witneſs of God, for the witneſs of God is greater. It is the Spirit (who is one God with the Father and with the Son) that beareth witneſs, becauſe the Spirit is truth; and therefore to be believed relied upon as the Apoſtle argueth, 1 *Cor.* 2. 1, 4, 5. 1 *Joh.* 5. 6, 7, 9. He that believeth not in the Spirit then believeth not in God. He that tells a lie to the Spirit tells a lie to God; not unto men but unto God, *Act.* 5. 3, 4.

Prop. 5. The Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt

being verily and truly Gods, and being diſtinct perſons in the one only and ſame Godhead; we may then (according to the grounds laid) direct our prayers to God with expreſs mention of one only, or of more, or of all the perſons in the Godhead. The laudable examples in Scripture may evince the lawfulneſs hereof. *Paul* directs his prayers with the expreſs mention ſometimes but of one perſon, *Epheſ.* 3. 14. Sometimes of two perſons, 1 *Theſ.* 3. 11. Sometimes of all three, 2 *Cor.* 13. 14. *John* and *Steven* explicitely addreſs themſelves to the ſecond perſon, *Rev.* 22. 20. *Act.* 7. 59. *Paul* atteſts the third perſon, *Rom.* 9. 1. as well as others apply themſelves to the firſt perſon; and St. *John* invocates all three perſons, *Rev.* 1. 4, 5.

Prop. 6. The Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt being but one only God, of one nature, mind, will, power, Godhead, they are therefore (according to the firſt Propoſition) to ſpeak ſtrictly and properly, but one only formal object of prayer, and of other parts of religious worſhip. So that our Saviour bids us baptize (not in the names but) in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt, *Mat.* 28. 19. Not only to intimate their co-equality in power and authority among themſelves, as being one and the ſame God, with whom are no degrees of power or perfection: But to inſtruct us how we ſhould conſider of, and come before them in that, and in all other acts of worſhip upon the ſame reaſon, as thoſe that are co-eſſential, and co-equally the original

original and object of all (as natural, ſo) inſtituted worſhip. Thus alſo were the Prieſts bound to ſay in bleſſing the people, *Jehovah, Jehovah, Jehovah bleſs thee, &c.* Num. 6. 24, 25, 26. Thereby pointing them and us; That though they are diſtinguiſhed in their perſonal ſubſiſtence; yet they are not to be divided in our prayers and ſupplications. Rather that as theſe three are one in the unity of the divine eſſence, ſo they ſhould be eyed as one in the unity of an end or object in all our devout and religious exerciſes.

Prop. 7. In directing prayer therefore to God with expreſs mention but of one or two perſons, the Saints of old did not, and our ſelves ought not to exclude the other perſon or perſons, becauſe they are all one God, co-equal and co-eternal, co-exiſting with each other, yea in each other, in the ſame Godhead. *Believe me* (ſaith Chriſt) *that I am in the Father, and the Father in me*, Joh. 14. 11. You need not any proofs from me, that the Godhead or divine nature and excellency is the formal and adequate ground and reaſon of divine Worſhip. Or that theſe three perſons are God, and therefore equal in the Godhead, equal in glory; not one greater or leſs than another, not one above or below another. Theſe premiſſes being of infallible verity, the inference is plain and obvious, therefore are they to be equally worſhipped; not one more or leſs than another, not one above or beneath another. For there being no difference or degrees in the ground and adequate reaſon of

the divine Worſhip that is due unto them, there can be no difference or degrees admittable with any ground or reaſon in the worſhip that is done unto them. If one be not leſs a God than another, one may not be leſs glorified than another.

Prop. 8. Yet laſtly, the Father being the fountain and firſt principle (though not of their eſſential ſubſiſtence, yet) of the perſonal ſubſiſtence of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt, (of which in the next Queſtion) and ſo of their peculiar manner of working *ad extra*, or without the Godhead, (*viz.* the Son working from the Father, and the Holy Ghoſt from them both.) The Saints therefore have, and your ſelves may eminently (though not excluſively) direct your prayers to God the Father; yea, and that for thoſe benefits which come to you, by the more eſpecial and eminent operation of God the Son, or of God the Holy Ghoſt. 'Tis eaſie to inſtance. *Paul* bleſſeth the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt for all the bleſſings in and by Chriſt, the remiſſion of his ſins, the redemption of his ſoul, *&c. Epheſ.* 1. 3, *&c.* Then beſeecheth he, *that the God of our Lord Jeſus, the Father of glory may give unto them the ſpirit of wiſdom and revelation in the knowledg of Chriſt*, ver. 17. *&c.* And again, *Chap.* 3. *v.* 14, 15, 16, 17. *I bow my knees* (ſaith he) *unto the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that you may be ſtrengthned by his Spirit, that Chriſt may dwell in your hearts by faith, &c.* Much to the ſame effect is the prayer of *Peter. Bleſſed be the God and Father of*

our

our Lord Jesus Christ, &c. 1 Pet. 1. 3, 4. Not to mention those passages of the *Psalmist, Uphold me with thy free spirit. Lead me by thy spirit, &c.* Psal. 51. 12. & 143. 10.

Q. 2. *How may we order our thoughts aright in distinguishing these three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost?*

I am not willing to weary either my self or you with a needless discussion of what you intend by this expression, *order your thoughts aright.* I suppose you would not have me understand thoughts so much in their larger and less proper notion and acceptation, (as they include all the interior acts of the Soul) as in their more limited, strict and proper sense, as they import the acts and apprehensions of the intellect. And that your meaning is how you may order your apprehensions (or more briefly may apprehend) aright in or touching the distinction of those persons. And truth is according as your thoughts are well or ill ordered in this strict sense, that your apprehensions are either fitting or faulty, so will your thoughts be in that larger sense; all the other inward motions of your Soul with relation hereunto, will be well or ill ordered, more free or more faulty. This only I shall therefore further premise.

Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are and may be presented to our thoughts under a two-fold consideration. 1. Common or essential, as they are God. 2. Peculiar or personal as

they are persons in the Godhead. And this consideration of them is either 1. More absolute, as they all subsist in the unity of the same nature. Or 2. Meerly relative in the order of one person to another, and distinction of one person from another. And now in accord to your desires, I offer you these Directions.

Direct. 1. Think of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as divine and increated persons. That they are persons I do not attempt to confirm, because you already confess both thing and name, as that which best agreeth to the Scripture-expression, as it doth *Heb.* 1. 3. 'Tis true, that this term person doth import the most excellent kind of subsistence, *viz.* intelligent and rational. (We call not the best of brutes a person), But in that this term is extended to Creatures, to Men, to Angels; you are to think of Father, Son and Holy Ghost as increated persons, from whom therefore you must remove all creature-imperfections, even in your very thoughts. As,

(1.) Created persons are of a determined, or rather finite nature. 1. Of finite perfections, 2. of a finite presence, 3. of finite power, and 4. of a finite permanence or duration. But these increated persons are infinite in their nature, the Godhead being infinite. 1. Of infinite perfections. *Touching the Almighty we cannot find him out*, Job 37. 23. *Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? It is as high as heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know? &c.* Job. 11. 7, 8, 9. 2. Of an infinite

finite preſence. *Do not I fill heaven and earth? ſaith the Lord. Yea, bleſſed Lord, whither ſhall I go from thy ſpirit? or whither ſhall I flee from thy preſence? Jerem.* 23. 24. *Pſalm* 139. 7. *&c.* 3. Of an infinite power. *I am God almighty*, ſaith he. *Is any thing too hard for me? &c. Gen.* 35. 11. *Jer.*32.27. 4. Of an infinite permanence or duration. *From everlaſting to everlaſting thou art God. He is the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity*, Pſal. 90. 2. Iſa. 57. 15.

(2) Created perſons are of a diviſible and compounded nature, and therefore changable. But theſe increated perſons are of a moſt indiviſible, ſimple and immutable nature. For ſo is the Godhead, a moſt pure, a moſt perfect nature, without the leaſt change, without the leaſt compoſition. Each perſon is called *Jehovah*, who is what he is; *viz.* a moſt pure and perfect being; without variableneſs, or ſo much as a ſhadow of turning, *Exod.* 3. 14. *Jam.* 1. 17. *God is light, and in him is no darkneſs at all*, 1 Joh. 1. 5.

(3) Created perſons are of a dependent nature. As all created perſons depend upon their firſt cauſe or principles for their continued preſervation; ſo the nature doth depend upon its proper perſon, for its ſupport or ſuſtentation. But now the divine nature, which is in theſe three perſons, doth not depend upon any or upon all theſe perſons for its ſuſtentation or ſubſiſtence. But all three perſons ſubſiſt in this one independent nature, as is ſaid of the ſubſiſtence of the Son, *Phil.*2.6. ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων, ſubſiſting in the

form, *i.e.* in the essential form of God, as being equal with God, as it follows. The Godhead it self is independent, or it is not Godhead, or it is not infinite. He is *Jehovah:* which implys that his being is neither from, nor for, nor in, nor by any other, but is most absolute and independent. *I am the first, and I am the last, and beside me there is no God,* Isa. 44. 6. c. 45. 21, 22.

(4) Created persons are of different natures; numerically different, though not specifically. True it is, that *Peter, Paul, Philip,* are of the same specifical nature; *i.e.* they are all of them men; but they are not of the same singular or numerical nature; *i.e.* they are not the same man. But these increated persons are of the same nature, not only of the same specifical, but of the same singular nature; they are the same God. That as you may safely say, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost: So you must think and say of them, that they are one and the same God, one and but one. *These three are one,* 1 Joh. 5. 7. *Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God,* יהוה אלהינו *is one Lord.* You must not then think of these three uncreated persons, as you would of those three created, as if these were distinct Gods, as those are distinct men.

(5) Created persons have many different accidents, and are distinguished from each other by a congeries or heap of accidents, as time, place, &c. But these increated persons are of that infinite perfection, as being the same God, that they are above any such thing

as

as an accident. The infinite ſimplicity of the Divine nature cannot admit of ſuch finite things as are accidents, as alſo nor can its immutability. 'Tis a confeſſed maxim amongſt Chriſtians, *Whatſoever is in God is God. I have ſworn by my holineſs*, ſaith God, *Pſal.* 89. 35. *God ſware by himſelf*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *Heb.* 6. 13. God's Holineſs then is God himſelf. 'Tis true the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt are diſtinguiſhed by their perſonal properties; or if you will needs ſo call it by their perſonal attributes. But they are not different by any perſonal accidents, as *James* and *John* are. This their perfect nature is utterly alien from, and abhorrent of.

Direct. 2. Think of Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, as the ſame God, ſubſiſting in one and the ſame undivided eſſence or Godhead. See that you do not divide the nature when you diſtinguiſh the perſons. Therefore *John* having ſhewn you theſe three diſtinct perſons, immediately ſubjoyneth that they have but one undivided eſſence, 1 *Joh.* 5. 7. The ſame in effect doth Jeſus, *Mat.* 28. 19. as we have noted before, Q. 1. *Prop.* 6. Enough may ſeem to have been already ſpoken to this, both there, and but even now. But I add, you ſhould not only think of them as one and the ſame God, in the ſame moſt ſingle eſſence, but think of them as inſeparably ſubſiſting in and with one another, in the unity of this ſame eſſence. That the Son ſubſiſts in the Divine nature or eſſence you ſaw but even now from *Phil.* 2. 6. *Direct.* 1. That the Son and Father ſubſiſt in the ſame Divine eſſence

essence is manifest, in that the Son is the express image of his Fathers person or subsistence, χαρακτὴρ, and his Father and he are one in essence, *Heb.* 1. 3. *Joh.* 10. 30. The Holy Ghost therefore must and doth subsist in the same essence; for he is one God, with the Son and Father, 1 *Joh.* 5. 7. *Believest thou not, saith Christ to Philip, that I am in the Father, and the father in me?* And then he calleth upon him from his word and from his works, which were the Fathers in and with him. *Believe me, that I am in the father, and the father in me, Joh.* 14. 10. And again afterward, he assureth his Disciples, *That at that day* (when the Holy Ghost the Comforter should be more plentifully communicated to them from the Father at that day) *ye shall know that I am in the father,* ver. 20. Now the Holy Ghost being co-essential with the Father, and with the Son, and subsisting with them in the same single and omnipresent nature, doth therefore also subsist in and with the Father and Son, and they also in and with the Spirit. In short then, you must so think of them that you do not divide when you do distinguish them. 1. Think of them as whose essential attributes are undivided. That the Son and Holy Ghost are equally excellent, infinite, immutable, *&c.* with God the Father, because God equal with the Father. And there can be no inequality betwixt them who are all infinite, *Phil.* 2. 6. *Psal.* 139. 7. 2. Think of them as whose essential actions are undivided. That whatsoever the Father doth as God (I say not as a person in the God-

Godhead) the same doth the Son, and the Holy Ghost likewise, as in creating the world, quickning the dead, &c. *Joh.* 5. 19. *Job* 33. 4. *Rom.* 8. 11.

Direct. 3. Think of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as three distinct persons in the undivided Godhead. Let your thoughts work according to the word of truth. Read that blessed Scripture, 1 *Joh.* 5. 7. Lo, how they are distinguished by their names, *the Father, the Word, (i.e.* the Son, *Joh.* 1. 14.) *and the Holy Ghost*; distinguished by number, three, these three that are one; one God, of one nature. Remember the Baptism of your Saviour. There might you have heard the Father owning the Son, and have seen the Son, who had taken our flesh, with the heavens opened to him by the Father, and have beheld the Spirit descending on the Son like a Dove from the Father, *Mat.* 3. 16, 17. Reflect else on your own Baptism, as it is required by our Saviour, *Mat.* 28. 19. Here their several distinct names are propounded, and their singular or Divine nature pointed at. Recall else if you will that beloved Sermon of our Mediator, *Joh.* 14. He doth more than once deliver you their distinction; distinguishing the Father from himself, and the Spirit from them both. *The Father will send the Holy Ghost in my name*, ver. 26. *I will pray the Father and he shall give you another comforter, even the Spirit of truth*, ver. 16, 17. Another from himself, who (as to his corporal presence) was going from them; another from the Father, *Who* (as he saith) *shall give you another*

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other comforter. But how another? Another God? It is impossible. Another person is only intelligible. So then you must think of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, not as distinct Gods, but as distinct persons in the Godhead; as one and the same God, but not as one and the same person. Think of the Father as not being the Son; or the Son as not being the Father; on the Holy Ghost as being neither Father nor Son; and upon the Father and Son as not being the Holy Ghost. Look upon them as co-equal, and therefore as distinct. It being most absurd to say, that the same person is equal to himself.

(1) Think of them as distinguished in and by the personal and incommunicable actions. The Father begets the Son, and hath given the Son to have life in himself as the Father hath life in himself, *Heb.* 1,5. *Joh.* 5.26. The unbegotten Father then is clearly distinguished from the only begotten Son, and the Son also from the Father. The Father and Son do emit the Holy Ghost by an eternal spiration, or communicating to him his distinct subsistence in the Divine Essence. The holy Scriptures speak of the holy Spirit as sent by and from both the Father and the Son, and as receiving from the Son as well as from the Father, *Joh.* 14.26. *c.* 15.26. *c.* 16. 14, 15. As the Spirit both of the Son, and of the Father, *Mat.* 10.20. *Gal.* 4.6. So that the Father and Son sending are, and must be distinguished from the Spirit sent. No one sends himself, or to himself, *Joh. ibid. &* c. 14. 16, 17. Nor doth the

the Scripture mention the Holy Ghoſt as the power only of the Godhead, but as a perſon in the Godhead. 'Tis not ſaid *it*, but *he* ſhall lead you, *he* ſhall glorifie me; the Comforter *whom* the Father will ſend. It is τὸ πνεῦμα, in the neuter gender, *Joh.* 16. 13. Yet *ver.* 14. not in the neuter but in the maſculine, ἐκεῖνος. *He* the Spirit of truth; he, he, he, he, he, he, he, ſeven times beſides in thoſe two verſes, and once more he, *ver.* 15.

(2) Think of them as diſtinguiſhed in and by their perſonal and incommunicable properties. 'Tis proper to the Father to beget the Son; to the Son, to be begotten of the Father; to the Holy Ghoſt to proceed both from the Father and the Son, *Heb.* 1. 5, 6. *Joh.* 15. 26. Theſe diſtinct incommunicable properties infer plainly the diſtinction of the perſons. The Son begotten cannot be the Father begetting. And the ſpirit proceeding cannot be either Father or Son, from whom he doth proceed.

(3.) Think of them as diſtinguiſhed in and by the principle, original and order of their perſonal exiſtence. The perſonal ſubſiſtence of the Father is from himſelf; *i.e.* he receives ſubſiſtence from no other without himſelf, but is the principle of ſubſiſting to the Son, and to the Holy Ghoſt, *Joh.* 5. 26. *c.* 14. 26. The perſonal ſubſiſtence of the Son is from the Father, *I live by the Father* (ſaith he) *I came forth from the Father*, Joh. 6. 57. *c.* 16. 28. The perſonal ſubſiſtence of the Holy Ghoſt is both from Father and Son; from whom he proceeds, and by whom he is ſent, *Joh.* 15. 26. *c.* 16. 14, 15.

(4) Think

(4) Think of them as distinguished in and by the principle, original and order of their operations and actions, which are terminated without the Godhead. The order of working follows that of being. As their essential being is undivided, so are their external works undivided also. You know the received rule, *Operæ trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa.* As Sanctification is wrought in us, both by God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, *Jude* 1. 1 *Cor.* 1. 2. *c.* 6. 11. As their personal being or subsistence is distinguished in the same order are their works also distinguished. Is the Father of himself? so he worketh of himself. *The Father of whom are all things*, saith the Apostle. *All things are delivered unto me of my Father*, saith our Saviour, 1 *Cor.* 8. 6. *Mat.* 11. 25, 26, 27. Is the Son of and from the Father? so he worketh of and from the Father, *I have not spoken* (saith he) *of my self; I do nothing of my self but as my Father hath taught me, &c. The Son can do nothing of himself but what he seeth the Father do, &c.* Joh. 12. 49. *c.* 8. 28. *c.* 5. 19, 20. Is the spirit both from Father and Son? So he worketh from the Father and Son. *He shall not speak of himself* (saith Christ) *but whatsoever he shall hear* (*viz.* from the Father, and from himself) *that shall he speak. He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you*, Joh. 16. 13, 14. with Joh. 15. 26. *c.* 14. 26.

Direct. 4. Think of Father, Son and Holy Ghost as distinguished, not only in but from the Divine essence. Though it be true, they are not essentially distinguished, yet it is also true,

true, that they are diſtinguiſhed from the eſſence. The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghoſt is God; theſe three are one God. Yet, though the Godhead be predicated of all the three perſons, the perſons in the Godhead are not predicated of one another. The Father is not the Son, nor is the Son the Father, nor is the Holy Ghoſt either Father or Son, or either of thoſe the Holy Ghoſt. The divine eſſence doth not beget, nor is begotten, nor doth proceed; which the infiniteneſs, ſimplicity and immutability thereof can no way admit. Yet the Father doth beget, the Son is begotten, and the Holy Ghoſt doth proceed. Think of the Divine eſſence then. 1. As one, only one, moſt ſingly and ſingularly one. But think of the Divine perſons as three, three diſtinct ſubſiſtents in this Divine eſſence. 2. Think of the Divine eſſence as only of and from it ſelf; but think of the Divine perſon of the Son as of or from the Father, and of the Holy Ghoſt as from them both. 3. Think of the Divine eſſence as common or communicated to all, and to each of the three perſons. But of the perſons as incommunicable, and impredicable of one another. The Father cannot be the Son, nor the Son the Father, *&c.* 4. The Divine eſſence (to conclude) is of abſolute conſideration, a perſon is of relative conſideration. A perſon (in the notion thereof) includeth, over and above the eſſence, a relation, as of the Father to the Son, of the Son to the Father, of both to the Holy Ghoſt, and of the Holy Ghoſt to both. A perſon

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in the Godhead is the Godhead distinguished by an incommunicable relative property. These things have received proof already; therefore I forbear here.

Direct. 5. Think of this Trinity of persons, in the unity of the same essence, not only with distinct apprehensions, but with dearest appretiations, with deepest abasements of thy self with divinest admiration of them, with devotedst adhesion, with deliciousest affections, and with devoutest actions.

(1) With dearest appretiations. The top of your blessedness or felicity is union and communion with this blessed Trin-unity. Let your highest thoughts turn in hither, and take up here. Prefer one God in three persons beyond all other good, and price him as your highest and only chief good. The glorifying and enjoyment of these three glorious persons in the one glorious Godhead is the business and blessedness of the glorified ones, to all eternity as is (not obscurely) intimated, *Rev.* 4. 8. —— *Holy, holy, holy Lord God almighty.* Let this mystery therefore have the highest throne in all the thoughts of your mind. Say with *David*, *Only* [*marg.* אך] *my soul waiteth upon God*, אלהים which noteth the plurality of persons in this one nature, *Psal.* 62. 1. To have the *trin-une* God your God is the highest happiness; and therefore calleth for your highest appretiations. The fellowship of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost was the highest felicity, the Priests could wish unto the people; or *Paul* unto his *Corinthians*, or *John* unto the seven Churches,

Numb.

Num. 6. 23. 27. 2 *Cor.* 13. 14. *Rev.* 1. 4. 5.

(2) With deepeſt abaſements, the Angels themſelves cover their faces, and the four and twenty Elders with their golden Crowns fall down before the Throne of God, when they come to ſee and celebrate this glorious Myſtery; to cry *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, Iſa.* 6. 2,3. *Rev.* 4. 8, 10. How much more ſhould we that dwell in Houſes of Clay! Here, if ever, ſhould reaſon lower its Top-ſail, and ſtrike or ſtoop rather to Revelation. Fleſh and Blood cannot reveal, nor doth, without the ſpirit of faith receive this myſterious union of three perſons in one nature; or that other, of two natures in one perſon, one Chriſt. Though theſe are not againſt, yet are they above reaſon, *Matth.* 16. 16, 17. 1 *Cor.* 2. 11, 12, 14. But if reaſon it ſelf call for *Elijahs* Mantle wherein to wrap its face from this dazling glory: what are our Rebellions! our Sins! what malignity is in them! and what murmuring ſhould be by us! while every ſin is a dart thrown at this glorious Eſſence, and as it were a ſtudy of diſſolving the ſubſtantial union of theſe three glorious Subſiſtents. It is enmity againſt God, contrariety to God, nor is any one an enemy to God, or he to them but by and for ſin, *Rom.* 8. 7. *Levit.* 26. 23, 24. *Iſa.* 63. 10. This is that which crucified the Son, quencheth the Spirit, and puts contempt upon the Father. Once more your very relation to ſo high a God ſhould humble you: Let my ſoul boaſt it ſelf in him; but bluſh and be aſhamed in me, who

am I? or what is my life, or my Fathers Family in *Israel*, that I should be Son-in-law to the King? Worm that I am and no man! not worthy of the least of all thy mercies! infinitely below thee as I am thy Creature; yet more infinitely as I am a Sinner, and yet will this glorious God become my God? these glorious Persons become my Portion? God the Father become my Father? God the Son my Saviour? God the Spirit my Sanctifier; I have seen thee *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty*, with the Eye of Faith I have seen thee: *Behold I am vile, what shall I say unto thee? Infinitely, Infinitely, Infinitely am I unworthy of thee, I Repent and Abhor my self in dust and ashes*; compare *Isa.* 6. 3. with 5. *Job.* 42. 2. 7. 40. 4. But I may not so expatiate.

(3) With divinest admiration Angels adore this mystery, and shall not men admire this mystery? *Isa.* 6. 3. here are such depths as I cannot wade through, can only wonder at. One, yet Three! Three, yet one! God the Father begetting God the Son, and yet the Godhead of the Son unbegotten! God the Holy Ghost proceeding from both, and yet the Holy Ghost God Coeternal and Coequall with both! All these one God in each other! *Alius & alius*, yet not *Aliud & aliud*! these are matters I find beyond my reason to comprehend, 'tis too short to reach them, yet find reason to confess & believe, because God hath revealed them. O that I could more devoutly admire, where I cannot distinctly apprehend concerning the Eternal generation of the Son, and procession

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of the Holy Ghost! And let my reason never cavil at that which is infinite, but remember continually that it self is finite! There are fewer difficulties in that than in this subject, where the Apostle falls off from a strickt discussion, and falls into a devout admiration, O the depth! O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledg of God! *How unsearcheable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out? Rom.* 11 33.

(4) With the devotedst adhesion of your understanding to this fundamental truth, of your will to this fountain-goodness. You are baptized in or into (εἰς) the *Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Matth.* 28. 19. Here abide, *I exhort you with* Barnabas *that with purpose of heart, you would cleave unto the Lord, Act.* 11. 23. Here is enough in the glorious Trinity to take up every thought of your heart, and whereon to imploy every faculty and power that you have. Here is the universality of truth to content your understandings, and of goodness to content your wills and affections. What truth, what good, what perfection, that bears proportion to such an intelligent and immortal nature as your souls are of, that is not to be found with this one God in these three persons? your blessedness is lodged up here, *Numb.* 6. 24. 25, 26. As much as you loosen from hence, you lose of blessedness.

(5) With diliciousest affections. How can you think of this glorious trinunity as your God, and your objective felicity, and be not

taken up, yea transported with joy? Here are the ravishing enjoyments of the restless joys of Saints and Angels above in glory, in their communion with these three holy persons, in the Almighty Godhead, *Rev.* 4. 8. How can you otherwise choose than be pleased with these undivided persons, who are to you an undivided portion, and an eternal blessedness? Is there any such garden of delights and comforts, as in contemplating the divine persons and perfections, especially as they are yours in so near and dear a relation? Where is your love? where is more loveliness? If you have any thoughts to lay out in love, here bestow them, who can never bestow them else-where with more comfort, or with better cause. In the Godhead, lo the perfections of love. Infinitely loving is too low an expression for him, he is infinite love, *for God is love*, 1 *Joh.* 4. 8. In each person, lo the prints of love. *The Father hath so loved you, as to give his only begotten Son to you*, ver. 9. 10. *Joh.* 3. 16. *The Son hath so loved you, as to give himself for you and to make a Bath of his own blood to wash you*, *Gal.* 2. 20. *Rev.* 1. 5. The Spirit doth so love you, as to apply all the behoofs of the Fathers electing love, and of the Sons redeeming love to you, *and to shed abroad the blessed beams thereof in you. Tit.* 3. 4, 5, 6. *Rom* 5. 5. How can you think of such united loves, and not be wrapt up into extasies of love for them, that are so loving and so lovely!

(6) With devoutest actions. The union of these three glorious persons, in the one glorious Godhead

Godhead calls for the united power, and putting forth of all your graces. Every Saint ſhould be a *Seraphim*, when he cometh to celebrate this myſtery of myſteries, in regard of the fervour and vigour of each renewed faculty and quality. Here is employment for every gracious habit. Here are infinite united excellencies to induce their moſt intenſive, extenſive and united exerciſe. Now for the ſtrongeſt faith, love, hope, &c. to give glory to God, for of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be glory for ever, *i.e.* ſay ſome, (*Aug. de Trin. l. 6. c. 10. Lomt. ſent. l. 1. diſt. 36.*) of the Father, through the Son and for the Spirit, *Alleluja*, *Alleluja*, *Alleluja*, to theſe three glorious perſons; and again, *Amen Alleluja*, to the one only Eternal Godhead! to allude to *Rev. 19. 1, 3, 4, 6. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghoſt.* A doxology of great antiquity, and of as great authority.

Thus may your thoughts walk freely, and work effectually, powerfully, practically upon this moſt worthy ſubject. I adviſe you not ſo much to ſpeculative thoughts, as to thoſe that are practique; which will affect your heart, and not amaze the head. The Trinity in Unity, and Unity in Trinity hath in it amazing difficulties, ſuch as may puzle the profoundeſt wits; ſuch as I am not aſhamed (with *Juſtin Martyr*) to confeſs, I can neither ſatisfie my ſelf in, nor counſel others to ſearch after. An holy Circle of the humbleſt admiring and higheſt believing will beſt commend, in this

an holy Christian. Let your thoughts run backward and forward in this holy round, from believing forward to admiring, where your short and straitned reason cannot comprehend : And from admiring backward again to believing, because Scripture Revelation hath made it clear. That of *Nazianzene* hath frequently affected me. οὐ φθάνω ἓν νοῆσαι, καὶ τοῖς Ἰριστὶ περιλάμπομαι οὐ φθάνω τὰ τριὰ διελεῖν καὶ εἰς τὸ ἓν ἀναφέρομαι. *Nondum pervenio Illigere hoc unum, & tum his tribus luce circumtundere pervenio hæc dividere & in hoc unum super hæc.*

Q. 3. *How may we order our thoughts aright concerning these three distinct persons as to Prayer?*

What hath been already premised, in answer to the two former questions may perhaps seem enough to others for clearing of this also. Thither I must remit you in a great part for satisfaction, and shall only subjoyn these six ensuing propositions which will be of good and great use, if you therewith take in what hath been already tendered you, for the right directing of your Prayers to these divine Persons, (which as your late discourse prompts me to think, was the great design you levelled at by this general question) and for resolving those difficulties which seem to perplex you.

Prop. 1. Though you are to distinguish the persons, yet it is not your duty in prayer to present unto each person distinct petitions. I confess

confeſs you may do it as *Paul* and the Prieſts ſometimes did, 2 *Cor.* 13. 14. *Numb.* 6. 24, 25, 26. But there is no command that you muſt do it, and if you conſult examples, you may find a whole conſtellation of Saints by whom it was not done; *Mat.* 11. 25. 26. *Joh.* 17. 1. 5. *Eph.* 1. 17. *Phil.* 4. 20. ſee Q. 1. Prop. 5.

Prop. 2. Though the diſtinction of the perſons ſhould be preſerved, as in habit within your thoughts for the right preſenting of your Prayers; yet it is not your duty to put it forth into act, in every prayer you preſent. For 1. There is no command for it, either in the unwritten book of nature, or in the written books of Scripture. *And where there is no law there is no tranſgreſſion, Rom.* 4. 15. 1 *Joh.* 3. 4. 2. Your capacities being conſidered which are very ſtrait and narrow, it becomes incompoſſible with thoſe concerns of Prayer which you have in hand, to carry along a diſtinct view of theſe diſtinct perſons in every diſtinct Petition. You have a command 1 *Cor.* 10. 31. *Whatſoever ye do, do it all to the glory of God.* An unintermitted intention of God, in every act of our lives, is granted to be neither needful nor poſſible. But if our intentions be (not formally and explicitely, but) only virtually and implicitely referred hither: ſo that we refer not any action to ſuch an end, as is not conſiſtent with this end, and that we actually refer all our actions to ſuch ends, as are in connexion with and in ſubordination to it; and if the habitual intention and reſpect of our

hearts be toward God and his glory upmoſt, and theſe intentions be often actuated and awakened. I ſay if it be thus, then have we Evangelically ſatisfied this commandment. You will eaſily make application of what I have ſaid, to the illuſtration of this propolition. Be ſure you do preſerve upon your thoughts the neceſſary diſtinction of theſe perſons, in the one only Godhead which is the object of Prayer, and though you do not explicitely mind their diſtinction in every Prayer; Yet let not your minds ſo fluctuate in any Prayer, as either to divide the Godhead or to exclude any perſon therein, or to confound all the perſons in whatſoever Prayer, ſee Q. 1. Prop. 3, 4, 6, 7.

Prop. 3. It is requiſite, and (at leaſt) expedient for the right directing of your Prayers, frequently to actuate ſuch thoughts in and about the diſtinction of theſe perſons before Paayer. Becauſe this ſerves thereunto as a means to its end. There is not only a habitual, but an actual preparation of our ſelves prerequired to Prayer, *Job* 11. 13. *Iſa.* 64. 7. *Pſal.* 108. 1. The actual preſenting of the divine eſſence to our ſelves, and preſſing the glory thereof upon our Souls which eminently ſhineth forth in all theſe perſons, is admirably preparatory hereunto; and hath a powerful influence, *per modum objecti* upon our minds, wills and affections; both to fetch them off from other purſuits and objects, and to fix and unite them in, and to the preſent office; To allure the heart to draw nigh to him, to aw it with

with the dread of him, to advance it to a dependance on and delight in him, and to abaſe & ſhame us in the ſenſe of our diſtance from him as Creatures, and the diſhonour we have done to him as ſinners: as you have ſeen (in effect) already, Qu. 2. Direct. 5. The Doctrine of the Trinity is as all Theological Doctrines are, a Practical Doctrine; The Scriptures propound it in order to Faith and Worſhip. Not one of theſe perſons, but is the object of both; as I have already proved, Q. 1. Prop. 4.

Prop. 4. In actuating diſtinct thoughts upon theſe diſtinct perſons, in the undivided eſſence, we may read (and thence recollect) many incouragements and inducements to Prayer, both of petition and Praiſe. Think of them in their eſſentiall union, and whatſoever of obligation on inducement, an infinite, immutable, abſolute, allſufficient, moſt pure, moſt perfect goodneſs and truth may offer you for your incouragement in Prayer, here it is, your Faith may freely take it up and improve it. Think of them in their perſonal diſtinction. And here alſo what is there (rather, what is there not?) that may perſwade and encourage Prayer? Let me intimate a few things.

(1) Think you of God the Father? The thoughts of that very name cannot but take with an ingenuous nature, and will bring his Children with Reverence and with Confidence upon their knees as it did *Paul*, *Eph.* 3. 14. But you muſt think further of him *as the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* (ibid.) This

conſideration

conſideration in confeſſion, will not only bend the knee but break the heart, *Luk.* 15. 18. *Zech.* 12. 10. This will immediately ſet the Soul a bleſſing of him: *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, 2 *Cor.* 1. 3. *Eph.* 1. 3. 1 *Pet.* 1. 3. Yea, and ſend your Soul a begging to him, and crying after him *Abba Father*, *i.e.* Father, Father, *O that the God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of mercies, would give unto you the ſpirit of wiſdom and revelation in the knowledg of him &c.* Gal. 4. 6. Jer. 3. 4. Eph. 1. 17 &c. Lo. 1. hence may your Soul reſume, he is my God and my Father. This was that bleſſed news which *Mary* muſt bring from Chriſt to his Diſciples. *Behold I aſcend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God*, *Joh.* 20. 17. 2. Hence may you Soul reaſon down all diſcouragements, 1. Why may I not adventure? tis not the preſence ſo much of a Judg as of a Father, is it not my Father that reacheth me out the Golden Scepter? There is ſomething of encouragement that he is my Father by Creation, the eyes of all may, and do wait upon him, and he gives them their meat in due ſeaſon. But how much more of encouragement is there, that he is the Father of Chriſt? my Father in my Chriſt. *Here your faith may ſee boldneſs and acceſs, with confidence, by the faith of him*, *Eph.* 3. 12. 2. *What may I not ask and have? He is able to do exceeding abundantly for me, above all that I can ask and think*; who could beget an only begotten Son, in his own unbegotten nature &c. yea, and he is willing too.

He

He that ſpared not his Son, but delivered him up for us all; how ſhall he not with him freely give us all things, Eph. 3. 20. Rom. 8. 32?

(2) Think you of God the Son? The very thought of his relation to the Father will be taking and tranſporting to honour him, and it will be your honour. *The Father loveth the Son, and ſheweth him all things that himſelf doth; hath committed all judgments unto the Son, that all men ſhould honour the Son even as they honour the Father: And if any ſerve me* (ſaith he) *him will my Father honour*; Joh. 3. 35. 5, 20, 22, 23. 12. 26. What! the only begotten Son of the Father, the Angels worſhip him upon that account; and how ſhould we whoſe nature he took, for whoſe ſake he ſuffered, &c. how ſhould we much more adore him, think of this Sonſhip? 1. It will afford you boldneſs in Prayer. You need not ſollicite the ſervants about the Court, Angels or Saints departed to preſent your petitions for you, the only begotten Son of the King of Kings, who is in the boſom of the Father, that hath his Fathers Eye, his Fathers Ear, his Fathers Heart, yea his Fathers Eſſence, *bids you come with boldneſs & in full aſſurance of faith by him*; Tells you, *that he will be your Advocate, and that he is now at the right hand of his Father your interceſſour*, Eph. 3. 12. Heb. 10. 20, 22. 7. 25. 2. It may aſſure you the bleſſing prayed for. Can you think the Father will deny his only begotten Son? of the ſame mind, will, nature with himſelf? who taketh your petitions out of your hand (or heart rather) and tenders

tenders them in your behalf unto his Father. *All things that the Father hath are mine ſaith Chriſt, Joh.* 16. 15. *Whatſoever ye ſhall ask the Father in my name he will give it you, ask and receive that your joy may be full, ver.* 22, 23, *c.* 15. 16. *This comfort, this confidence have we that believe on the name of the Son of God, 1 Joh.* 5. 13, 14.

(3) Think you of God the Holy Ghoſt? *Lo this is the ſpirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father*; He proceedeth from, and is one with the Father and with the Son, and that to further your union and communion with himſelf and them: *He is not only a ſpirit of adoption to the Saints, but a Spirit of ſupplication in the Saints*; *Rom.* 8. 15. *Zech.* 12. 10. If the temptations of the fleſh pull you back, let the thoughts of the Spirit put and prick you on, that you make it a work not of formal ſaying, but of fervent praying; *Praying in the Holy Ghoſt, Jude* 20. The thoughts of him 1. Lead you to the origine of ability for prayer. Prayer is too hard for fleſh and blood; which therefore hangs backward: your thoughts now prompt you an omnipotent help. We know not either what we ought to pray for, or how to pray for it as we ought. Now the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, συναντιλαμβάνεται ſtands as it were over againſt us at the other end of the burden and puts under his ſhoulder with us, and ſo, we may carry the right of this duty cleverly and come off cherily, *Rom.* 8. 26. 2. Leave your hopes of the acceptance of your prayers.

This

This is not the Spirit of the world but the Spirit which is of God. *And God knoweth what is the mind of his own Spirit, who, for matter and manner maketh interceſſion in the Saints, as the Son doth for the Saints, according to the will of God*, 1 *Cor.* 2. 12. *Rom.* 8. 26, 27. *Gal.* 4. 6. Nay this Spirit is God, exiſting in, and equal with the Father and the Son, in the ſame Godhead: And therefore God the Son cannot deny to tender, God the Father cannot deny to take what Prayers are preſented by you in the power of the Spirit. Let the thoughts of the Holy Ghoſt then be more frequent and familiar with you before prayer. The thoughts of him will put you at a greater diſtance from, and upon a greater defiance of your own fleſhly appetitions and inclinations in Prayer, will prompt you what you ſhould deſire in prayer, how, and for what, will put you into a more Spiritual frame and diſpoſition for Prayer; yea, and upon praying for a more abundant and efficacious influx and aſſiſtance of the Spirit of Prayer; *which your heavenly Father will be ſure to give unto them that ask him*; *Luk.* 11. 13.

Prop. 5. You may proportionably order your thoughts concerning theſe diſtinct perſons as to prayer, by conſidering of and conforming your Prayers to the diſtinct manner of their exiſtence and operation, in the Godhead which is the object of Prayer. The premiſſes make this plain

plain enough without more proof. But it is needful that I Inſtance, and be more particular as to both their exiſtence and operation.

(1) As concerns the diſtinct manner of their ſubſiſting in the ſame Godhead, which hath been delivered you before on Qu. 2. This may direct you how to order your thoughts and their whole tranſaction, both. 1. As to their perſons, 2. As to your praiſes and petitions, 3. And in or as to both, as the perſons are united with each other, in the ſame Eſſence.

(1) As to theſe perſons. I adviſe you to apply your ſelf to the Father through the Son, by whom alone you can hope for acceptance, & by the Spirit, from whom you muſt have ability and aſſiſtance. The Father is the firſt Perſon in order of theſe perſonal ſubſiſtants, that giveth ſubſiſting life both to Son and Spirit. The Son is the ſecond or middle Perſon ſubſiſting of and from the Father, and with the Father emitting or ſending forth the Spirit. The Spirit is the third and laſt in the order of theſe three Perſons, ſubſiſting of and from them both; and ſent forth by both of them. So then though it be not always neceſſary to keep this order of the perſons in your mentions of them, in prayer to all three perſons; (becauſe you find clear precedents, by whom this order mentioned was not obſerved;

ſerved; 2 *Cor.* 13, 14. *Rev.* 1. 4, 5.) Yet it is always neceſſary as to the inward manner and intentions of your mind, that your applications be by the ſpirit (by his aſſiſtance.) 2. through the Son (through his mediation, truſting by and for him to find acceptance) to the Father, (who through the Son and by the Spirit giveth out anſwers.) As the Apoſtle doth more than intimate, *Eph.* 2. 18. *Through him i.e.* the Son, *We have an acceſs by one Spirit unto the Father.*

(2) As to your praiſes and petitions. This lets you ſee what a wide and an effectual door is opened to you. To ask from, and acknowledg to the Father all thoſe bleſſings, which come to you by his giving of the Son, *Eph.* 1. 3. 1 *Pet.* 1. 3. And to Father and Son, whatſoever benefits are communicated to you, by their giving of the Spirit, *Rom.* 15. 13. 2 *Cor.* 1. 21, 22. So that you need not determine, nor ſhould limit your requeſts or thanks to that only perſon, from whom theſe bleſſings do in a more eſpecial manner proceed. The Father being the firſt principle of perſonal ſubſiſtence, all things are from him by the Son, and all things are referred back again by him to the Father, 1 *Cor.* 8. 6. *Joh.* 5. 19. The Spirit ſubſiſting from both, and being ſent out by both referrs you back in all, both to Son and Father. *John* 16. 13, 14, 15. *Gal.* 4. 6.

(3) As

(3) As your prayers look upon all the Persons, as inſeparably united in the ſame eſſence. Learn to admire their mutual inexiſtence one in another, and in the ſame Godhead. Which our Saviours example in that ſolemn prayer, *Joh.* 17. may inſtruct you. *As thou, O Father, art in me, and I in thee &c.* ver. 21. Think you upon the Father? Therewith admire and adore the Son; *who is the brightneſs of his Fathers Glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon, Heb.* 1. 3. Think you of the Son? therewith admire and adore the Father, *He and his Father are one, Joh.* 10. 30. Think you of the Holy Ghoſt? Therewith admire and adore both Son and Father. *He proceeds both from the Father and from the Son, Joh.* 15. 26. Think you of any? admire and adore all. *They are all one eternal perfection, one God, 1 Joh.* 5. 7.

(2) As to the diſtinct manner of their working. What it is you have ſeen already, Q. 2. *Direct.* 3. *n.* 4. The Son worketh from the Father, and the Spirit from them both. This directs you not only how to apply your ſelves to theſe perſons; (to the Father through the Son by the Spirit as before,) but alſo in and for what, *viz.* according to the more appropriate works of each perſon. 'Tis true there is no work of the Godhead without it ſelf, but it is common to, and predicable of every perſon in the Godhead. But yet (as ſome will obſerve) it is uſual in the Scriptures to aſcribe the former, middle, and latter part of theſe external works with proportion to the diſtinct order of theſe undivided

undivided agents. I inſtance the great work of mans Salvation. Our Salvation may be eminently conſidered in three parts or ſteps, 1. The appointment, 2. The acquiſition, 3. The application of it.

1. The former part, the appointment of man to Salvation, Election which is the firſt ſtep is eminently aſcribed to the firſt perſon, the Father, *Eph.* 1. 3. 4, 5. *Gal.* 1. 15. 16 *Who hath appointed us to Salvation by his Son, through Sanctification of the Spirit*, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 9. 2 *Theſ.* 3. 13 *Elect according to the foreknowledg of God the Father, through Sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and ſprinkling of the blood of Jeſus Chriſt ſaith* Peter, 1 *Pet.* 1. 2. The Father then ſhould eminently have the glory of our election, in our prayers of thankſgiving as the Apoſtles render it him, ver. 3. *Eph.* 1. 3, 4, *&c.*

2. The middle part, the acquiſition of Salvation for man in redemption, is eminently aſcribed to the middle or ſecond perſon, the Son, who in the fulneſs of time was ſent forth from the Father, and offered up himſelf through the eternal Spirit, *that he might obtain eternal redemption for us, and we might receive the adoption of ſons by him*, *Gal.* 4. 4, 5. *Heb.* 9. 12, 14. *And ſo in him we have redemption through his blood*, it being the blood, though of an humane nature, yet not of an humane but of a divine perſon, the Son of God, *And ſo God is ſaid to purchaſe the Church with his own blood*, *Col.* 1. 13, 14. *Eph.* 1. 6, 7. *Act.* 20. 28. The Son then ſhould eminently have the glory of

our redemption in our thankſgivings and ſupplications, as they give it him, *Revela.* 5. 8, 9.

3. The latter part, the application of Salvation to man, which is begun in Sanctification and Conſummate in Glorification, is eminently aſcribed to the laſt perſon, to the Holy Ghoſt, who is therefore called the Spirit of Holineſs, 2 *Theſ.* 3. 13. 2 *Pet.* 1. 2. *Rom.* 1. 4. The Father predeſtinateth none to happineſs but through holineſs. The Son hath purchaſed happineſs for none but ſuch as partake of holineſs. The Spirit, that proceedeth from the Father and the Son, printeth out their holy image upon us. *And ſo we are ſaved according to the mercy of the Father, for the merit of the Son, by the waſhing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt, and are now acceptable being ſanctified by the Holy Ghoſt,* *Tit.* 3. 4, 5, 6. *Rom.* 15. 16. The Holy Ghoſt then ſhould eminently have the glory of our ſanctification, as alſo of the glorification of our ſouls and bodies, which is likewiſe by and from him. *Rom.* 8. 11.

Prop. 6. You may piouſly direct your thoughts in Prayer, touching theſe diſtinct perſons, by a deliberate view of what others have done in their applications to all thoſe perſons, and by doing accordingly. The laudable examples in Scriptures are left us for imitation in the like circumſtances. The bleſſing wherewith *Paul* concludeth his Epiſtle to the *Corinthians* ſhall be the only

only inſtance I will produce and proſecute: which will both give to, and receive light from the laſt propoſition. *The Grace of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the love of the Father, and the Communion of the Holy Ghoſt be with you all. Amen.* It is true, that Grace, Love, Communion are not ſtrictly appropriated to any one of theſe perſons in the Scriptures. Yet the Apoſtle doth obſervably apply himſelf to theſe deſtinct perſons, with theſe deſtinct petitions. And (no doubt) therefore we alſo may, to the Father in admiring and in asking of his love, to the Son in praying of and praying for his grace, to the Holy Ghoſt in beſeeching of and bleſſing him for his Communion.

The Fathers love begins our felicity and ſalvation. There is his love of intention or benevolence, ordaining the end and us to the end, life and happineſs. There is his love of execution or beneficence, ordering out to us and beſtowing on us the means, that may bring us to this end. Both principal in giving his Son to redeem us, and his ſpirit to renew us. 2. And leſs principal, his Ordinances, Officers, Word, Rod, &c. let the Father be accepted, admired, adored in our prayers as to his love. *Behold what manner of love the Father hath beſtowed upon us, &c.* 1 *Joh.* 3. 1. *&c.* 4. 9, 10. *&c.*

The grace of the Son doth (as it were) go on with our Felicity and Salvation. Grace abounds, ſuperabounds, reigns, through righteouſnes, unto Eternal Life; by

Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, *Rom.* 5. 20, 21. The Son hath procured grace for us, redeeming us from guilt, reconciling us to God. The Son publiſheth grace to us, and is as it were a publick treaſury of grace for us; that of his fulneſs we may receive grace for grace. Come you then in your prayers to the Son for grace, celebrate the grace that is in and with the Son, and comes to you by the Son. I ſay with the Apoſtle, *The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with your Spirit. Amen*; As he often *Rom.* 16. 24. 1 *Cor.* 16. 23. *Gal.* 6. 18. *Philem.* 25.

The Communion of the Holy Ghoſt is in conſummation of this happy enterprize begun. He it is that comes and applies all that good which a loving Father hath purpoſed to us, *And all that grace which the everlaſting Son hath procured for us, and ſo giveth us fellowſhip with himſelf, with the Father and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt*, *Phil.* 2. 1. *Eph.* 3. 16, 21. 1 *Joh.* 1. 3. *Tit.* 3. 5, 6. Breathe more after his Communion than in your prayers: Bleſs him more for this Communion in your praiſes. Let me only remember you that this direction concerns you moſtly (if not only) when your prayers are directed to all three perſons, with diſtinct and expreſs mention as *Pauls* here were. It is high time to conclude.

Happy, happy, happy, are thoſe Prayers which are terminated upon theſe three holy perſons, in one and the ſame infinitely holy Eſſence. The enjoyment of this trinune God by Faith, is the higheſt happineſs of the Church

Church militant. The enjoyment of this trinune God by ſight is the height of bleſſedneſs in the Church Triumphant.

Trinuni Deo ſit Gloria.

SIR.

THus I have given you my thoughts upon this difficult but divine Subject with as much clearneſs as I could, and with more contractneſs here and there (happily) than you would. Yet you ſee to what a length this diſcourſe is drawn out much beyond the limits of a letter, a Tract I did not intend, nor you (that I know) expect. If God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt may be glorified by us, and we edified and built up into them it is enough. To this God and to the word of his grace I commend you, and crave your improvement of whatſoever intereſs your prayers can make with him, for

SIR,

Your real Friend and Lover,

J. N.